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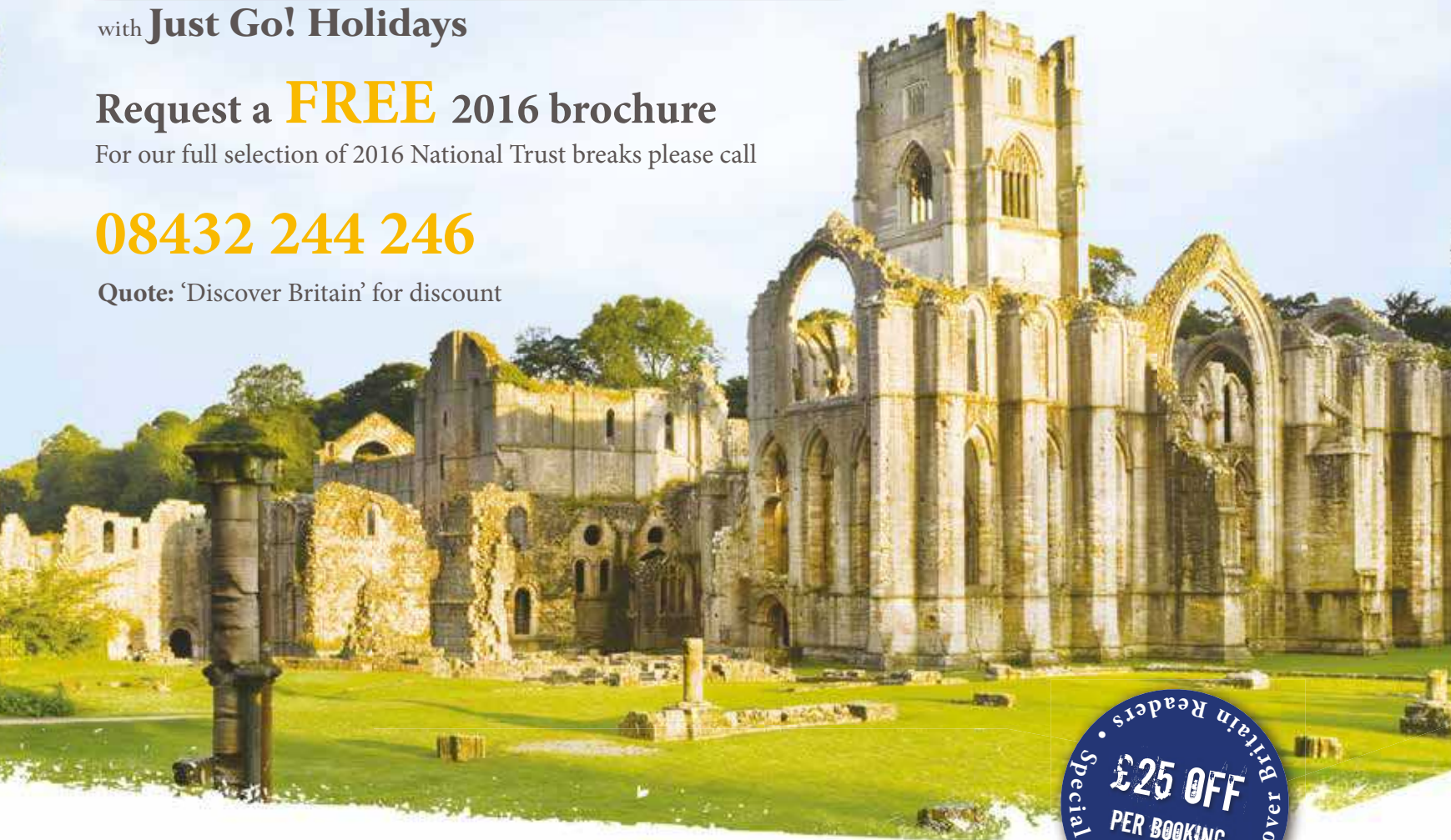
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Editor's note

MAYBE IT'S THE TIME OF YEAR but there is a romantic flavour to this spring issue. Historian Nigel Jones pays a visit to beautiful **Kenilworth Castle** (p19), where Robert Dudley went to spectacular lengths to woo **Queen Elizabeth I**. He may have captured her heart, but Elizabeth's head ruled in the end. For more successful attempts at finding a royal spouse, we mark 80 years since King Edward VIII abdicated for the woman he loved in a piece exploring scandalous stately settings – from **Brocket Hall**, where the future George IV visited his mistress, to **Cliveden**, the setting of the famous Profumo Affair. Other beauty spots in this issue include **picturesque Suffolk** (p82), famed for its painters, and the Welsh town of **Hay-on-Wye** (p37), a book-lover's paradise.

Less famed for their romantic tendencies, the mighty **Normans** are another recurring theme. This year marks a very special anniversary: 950 years since 1066, when **William the Conqueror** defeated King Harold II in the **Battle of Hastings** (p44). Claimed by some to be the last time Britain was successfully invaded – though that point is one to be debated in the history classroom – what is clear is that the Normans left their mark on Britain's landscape in the form of their colossal castles and cathedrals. Alexander Larman visits Hastings (p44), while I explore eight **great British cathedrals** (p26), most of which have Norman origins. Finally, don't miss our revamped **Discover London** section featuring the summer's most exciting cultural highlights.

NICOLA RAYNER *Interim Editor*



On the cover: Sissinghurst Castle Garden, Kent.
National Trust Images/Jonathan Buckley



Page 82 Discover the Georgian splendour of Ickworth House and Suffolk's other artistic treasures

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Travel notes

Sally Hales tours Britain to bring you the latest travel news



GET LOST IN BRONTË COUNTRY

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of *Jane Eyre* author Charlotte Brontë and, with her siblings' bicentenaries also rolling around over the next few years, *Brontë200*, a huge programme of events to celebrate their achievements, has been launched.

With much of the focus on their former home, now the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Haworth, Yorkshire, there's also never been a better time to explore "Brontë country". Discover the moors and dales with the Yorkshire Tour Company, which offers a range of in-depth tours of the northern county, so you can get completely lost in the world of the Brontës.

www.theyorkshiretourcompany.com
www.bronte.org.uk



MAKING AN IMPRESSION

Three major new exhibitions open this year at the Holburne Museum in Bath to celebrate 100 years since Sir William Holburne's collection moved to its current Grade I-listed home on Great Pulteney Street.

Impressionism: Capturing Life unites 28 masterpieces from British public collections to celebrate the Impressionists' observations of humanity, *Stubbs and the Wild* delves into the visionary 18th-century world of George Stubbs through his realistic animal studies and fantasy pieces, while *Silver: Light and Shade* tells the story of silver.

The exhibitions are enhanced by new artworks that respond to the museum's collections, which include an impressive Gainsborough, as well as public events throughout the year.

www.holburne.org



The Byam Family by Thomas Gainsborough





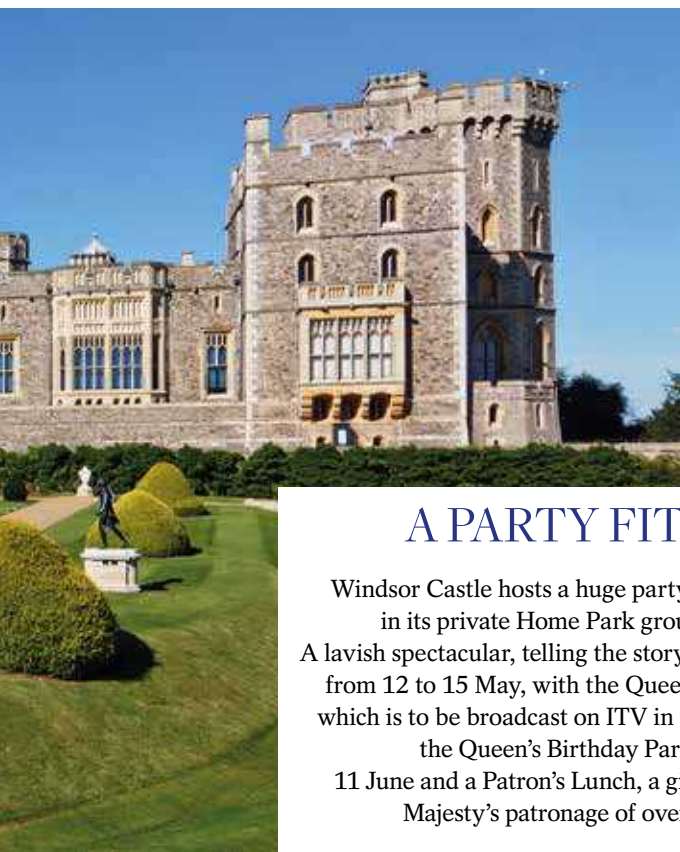
NEW TO THE NATIONAL TRUST

The National Trust is to take over the running of the beautiful Shugborough Estate in Staffordshire. The current house dates back to 1694 and was once home of photographer Lord Lichfield, the 5th Earl of Lichfield and cousin to the Queen, and boasts stunning Grade I-listed gardens and exquisite artefacts (top left). After the transfer, the estate will close for renovations and reopen in spring 2017 as a traditional National Trust property, meaning its members can visit for free. It is hoped the estate will also open all year round. www.nationaltrust.org.uk

DOVE COTTAGE

The home Romantic poet William Wordsworth called “the loveliest spot that man hath ever found”, Dove Cottage in Grasmere (below), has won an almost £5m grant. The Wordsworth Trust, which owns the Lake District property, will use the Heritage Lottery Fund money to transform the Wordsworth Museum in time for the 250th anniversary of the poet’s birth in 2020.

Wordsworth and his sister, Dorothy, lived at Dove Cottage from 1799 to 1808. It was during this time that the poet penned the immortal line “*I wandered lonely as a cloud*”, inspired by the daffodils he saw at Ullswater. www.wordsworth.org.uk



A PARTY FIT FOR A QUEEN


Windsor Castle hosts a huge party for HM The Queen this spring in its private Home Park grounds to mark her 90th birthday. A lavish spectacular, telling the story of the Queen’s life, takes place from 12 to 15 May, with the Queen attending on the last evening, which is to be broadcast on ITV in the UK. In London, look out for the Queen’s Birthday Parade on Horse Guards Parade on 11 June and a Patron’s Lunch, a giant street party celebrating Her Majesty’s patronage of over 600 organisations, on 12 June. www.hmq90.co.uk

SHAKESPEARE’S PLACE

This year is packed with celebrations of Shakespeare’s life and work to mark the 400th anniversary of his death. But the most enduring commemorative project will open in his hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon in July. The site of his former home, New Place, has undergone a huge transformation into a major new heritage landmark.

A series of beautifully landscaped gardens allows you to walk in the footsteps of the Bard, while new art installations help you to imagine sitting at Shakespeare’s desk and be inspired by the views of the Tudor knot garden he would have known. www.shakespeare.org.uk





This page: The swimming pool at Cliveden, where Christine Keeler met John Profumo

Right, top to bottom: The Duke of Windsor's hideaway, Fort Belvedere in Windsor Great Park; the Duke of Windsor, formerly King Edward VIII, with Wallis Simpson



Behind CLOSED DOORS

It was at his hideaway in Windsor Great Park that, 80 years ago, King Edward VIII gave up the throne so he could marry the woman he loved. In search of the settings for more society scandals, **Nicola Rayner** explores the hidden doorways and lovers' meeting places where romantic exploits threatened national security

What could you possibly want that queer old place for?" King George V asked his son, the future Edward VIII, in 1929, adding gruffly, "Those damn weekends, I suppose." The place in question was Fort Belvedere in Windsor Great Park; as to the king's query, unfolding events in the 1930s would provide the answer.

It was at Fort Belvedere that Edward's relationship with a certain Mrs Simpson, a twice-married American divorcee, would blossom; and, indeed, it was in that same setting King Edward VIII would sign the Instrument of Abdication in December 1936, in the presence of his three brothers, including shy Bertie – the future George VI – whose story is told in the film *The King's Speech*. ➤



Scandalous stately homes

Edward later claimed to have “created a home at the fort just as my father and grandfather had created one at Sandringham”, saying tellingly, “here I spent some of the happiest days of my life.” The secluded building started life as a turreted folly in the mid-1700s, offering, no doubt, the beautiful views suggested by its name.

It was later developed by Sir Jeffrey Wyatville, who also remodelled parts of Chatsworth, for George IV but the sociable Edward made it his own, adding bedrooms and bathrooms for large house parties, as well as a swimming pool, a tennis court and stables.

Here, away from the more formal atmosphere at Windsor Castle, Edward and his numerous guests could relax, dance to gramophone records after dinner and play parlour games (it is said Edward even had a penchant for playing the bagpipes).

Handsome Edward was popular with the fairer sex – his first female companion at the fort was probably Freda Dudley Ward – but his father could never have anticipated Edward’s final choice of companion, a woman who was still married to her second husband when she and Edward first met.

To this day, Edward remains the only British monarch to have given up the crown voluntarily, saying famously it would be impossible for him to continue as king “without the help and support of the woman I love”.

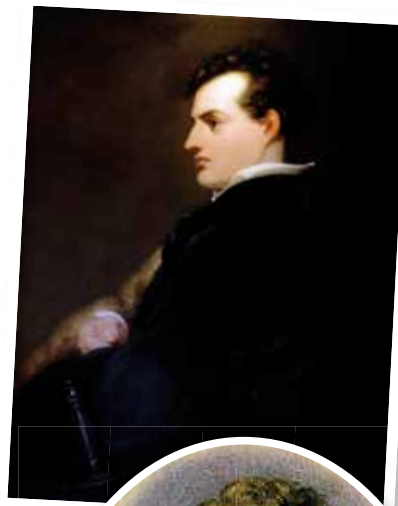
Of course, private properties – particularly those located in acres of parkland – lend themselves splendidly to clandestine meetings: the further away from the prying eyes of the public, the better.

Although Fort Belvedere remains a private residence today, it’s possible to visit and even stay at a number of the settings for historical scandals, which have since opened their doors to the public.

OF LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS

Brocket Hall in Hertfordshire, the scene of more than one outrageous scandal, was home to another mistress of another Prince of Wales. Elizabeth Lamb, the wife of the first Lord Melbourne, was a lover of the hedonistic Prince Regent, later George IV, a frequent visitor to Bocket Hall. The grateful prince gave his accommodating mistress a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds which still hangs in the ballroom and created the Chinese-style suite of rooms – known as the Prince Regent Suite (left) – where it is possible to stay today.

The ambitious hostess Lady Melbourne did not stop at the Prince Regent – she also enjoyed liaisons with the 5th Duke of Bedford, as well as the 3rd Earl of Egremont. However, her behaviour pales in comparison with that of her daughter-in-law Lady Caroline Lamb, niece of



Clockwise from left: Bocket Hall’s Prince Regent Suite; Lord Byron; Lady Caroline Lamb; Bocket Hall

yet another infamous adulteress, Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire.

Famous for her torrid affair with the poet Lord Byron, it is Caroline who is said to have coined the epithet that he was “mad, bad and dangerous to know”. For herself, her words could not have been more prescient. Their passionate affair raged through the summer of 1812, but when Byron’s ardour began to cool, Caroline did not give up her lover as easily as her family would have liked.

Encountering the poet with his new mistress, the Countess of Oxford, at Lady Heathcote’s ball in early July 1813, she smashed a glass and cut her wrists, causing Byron to accuse her of theatrics (“Lady Caroline performed the dagger scene”).

Later, she broke into the poet’s rooms, scribbling “Remember me!” over a copy of one of Byron’s books. He responded with an angry poem that included the final lines: “*Remember thee! Ay, doubt it not. Thy husband too shall think of thee! By neither shalt thou be forgot, Thou false to him, thou fiend to me!*” More drama was to follow: in 1816

Lady Caroline’s first novel, *Glenarvon*, revealed thinly disguised details of her amorous adventures. Yet, remarkably, she did not formally separate from her husband for a further nine years. Of course, some of the stories are possibly apocryphal: that she had herself served up naked to her husband in a soup tureen on his birthday, for example, or that she fell from her horse at ➤



ALAMY/WORLD HISTORY ARCHIVE/GLASSHOUSE IMAGES/PICTORIAL PRESS LTD



the shock of seeing Byron's funeral cortège passing the Bocket estate in 1824, thereby learning of his death.

It is likely her demise at Bocket Hall was a sadder, more drawn-out affair. Her struggle with mental instability in her later years was exacerbated by abuse of alcohol and laudanum, and she began to show symptoms of dropsy – swelling caused by the build-up of fluids. William Lamb, by that time chief secretary for Ireland, returned to be with Lady Caroline when she died in 1828. He went on to become Queen Victoria's first prime minister and a close friend of the monarch – as to what she made of his marital past, one can only guess.

Losing one's head for love is something of a recurring theme. Author Elinor Glyn decamped to Montacute House in Somerset when she fell in love with George Nathaniel Curzon, 1st Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, who wooed her by sending her a tiger skin – a reference to her erotic romance *Three Weeks*, which scandalised polite Edwardian society and inspired the jingle: “*Would you like to sin with Elinor Glyn on a tiger skin?*”

Elinor struggled with Montacute House's draughty rooms and icy conditions but she threw herself into redecorating Curzon's Elizabethan home. Her own room, adorned with brightly coloured birds of paradise on the walls, speaks of her hope for the relationship. But Curzon proved himself unworthy of such devotion: Elinor was to learn of his engagement to another in *The Times*, and destroyed over 500 of his letters.

And if proof of secret goings-on at Montacute were needed, look out for the hidden door, where Lord Curzon had an en suite built inside a cupboard... ➤



Left, top to bottom:
Montacute House in Somerset; the flamboyant Elinor Glyn **Above:** The house's secret en suite **Right:** Glyn's lover and Montacute House tenant George Nathaniel Curzon

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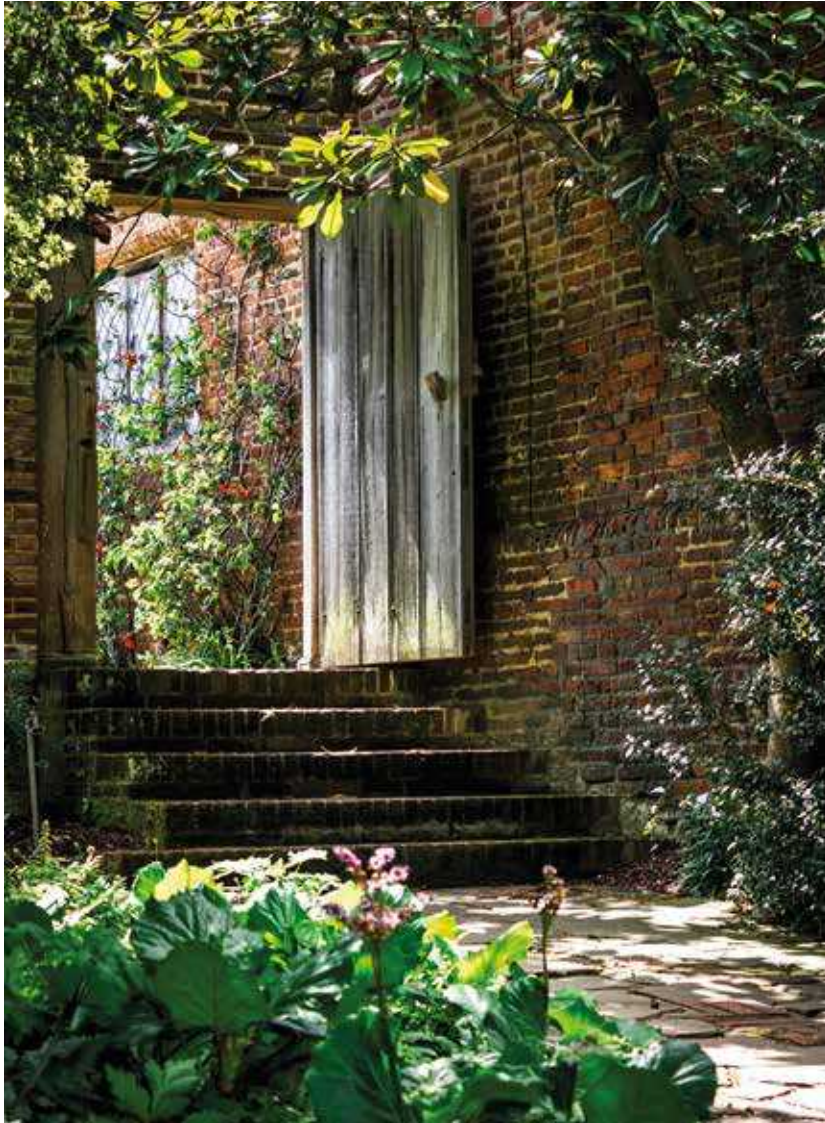
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Scandalous stately homes



SECRET GARDENS

It is hard to imagine a more romantic setting for furtive trysts than Sissinghurst Castle in Kent, where the novelist and poet Vita Sackville-West and her husband, diplomat and author Harold Nicolson, conducted their open marriage. The Elizabethan building was derelict when the couple first set eyes on it in 1930 and their restoration of the property, with its fairytale watchtower as well as its glorious garden, is the stuff of legend.

To this day Sissinghurst Castle Garden remains one of the most famous in the country and the epitome of an English garden. Designed with different verdant “rooms”, it opened to the public in the late 1930s, with an admission fee of one shilling (hence Vita’s name for visitors – shillingses).

It has been said that Sissinghurst’s success lies in the creative tension between Harold’s formal design and Vita’s lavish planting. Perhaps oddly, to more conventional minds, the couple’s union was a happy one in many respects, despite affairs on both sides: hers almost always with women, and his invariably with men.

The story of the unorthodox relationship is recounted in *Portrait of a Marriage* by their son, Nigel Nicolson. Harold’s greatest affair was with the critic Raymond Mortimer and Vita’s with Violet Trefusis, the daughter of Edward VII’s mistress Alice Keppel (though this was over by the time the couple came to Sissinghurst).

Vita also made a strong impression on Virginia Woolf, who used her as the inspiration for the androgynous central character in her 1928 novel *Orlando: A Biography*, dedicating the book to her lover. ►

STAY IN A SCANDALOUS SETTING

Brocket Hall

Just over 20 miles outside London, Brocket Hall in Hertfordshire boasts that “the scent of scandal can be found in the fabric of the building back to its roots in the 13th century”. The Regency stately home is available for exclusive hire, complete with 30 bedrooms featuring period antiques, oil paintings and traditional butler service. The bedrooms are named after people who lived in or were associated with the property, such as the Prince Regent, whose mistress, Elizabeth Lamb, lived at Brocket Hall. If your party isn’t big enough to hire the entire hall, book one of the 16 rooms at Melbourne Lodge: the elegant Georgian conversion (right) was once home to the steeds that took



the hall’s residents hunting. Or dine at Auberge du Lac, the hall’s former hunting lodge and now an award-winning restaurant in an exquisite lakeside setting. www.brocket-hall.co.uk

Sissinghurst Castle Farmhouse

Stay 50 metres away from the famous gardens at Sissinghurst in Kent in a handsome Victorian farmhouse (right) recently restored by the National Trust. The seven-bedroom B&B, around a 90-minute drive from London, boasts stunning views across the 300-acre estate of ancient woodland and farmland or the Elizabethan tower. That “hurst” is the Saxon term for an enclosed wood is telling of the site’s rich history. A moated manor



Left: Sissinghurst's exquisite garden
Right: The dovescote in the orchard at Sissinghurst with the Elizabethan tower in the background
Below: Sissinghurst's unorthodox owners Harold Nicolson and Vita Sackville-West



house was built in the Middle Ages, with a new brick gatehouse added in the 1530s by one of Henry VIII's privy councillors, Sir John Baker. Sissinghurst has hosted monarchs Edward I and Elizabeth I, but is today most associated with the poet Vita Sackville-West and her open marriage to Harold Nicolson.

www.sissinghurstcastlefarmhouse.com

Cliveden House

Once a byword for decadent parties, Cliveden, overlooking the River Thames in Berkshire, has hosted almost every British monarch since George I. The hedonistic 2nd Duke of Buckingham built the first incarnation of the house for pleasure

to entertain his friends and mistress. Twice destroyed by fire since, Cliveden was home to three dukes, an earl and Frederick, Prince of Wales before America's richest citizen William Waldorf Astor bought it in 1893. Today, the house is a AA five red star hotel (the highest accolade possible) set in almost 400 acres of sublime formal gardens and woodlands, managed by the National Trust. Each room is named after a prominent figure from Cliveden's past and decorated accordingly. Or to get closer to Cliveden's scandalous history, stay at the riverside Spring Cottage (right) where Stephen Ward and Christine Keeler were staying in 1961 when Keeler and Profumo met.

www.clivedenhouse.co.uk



Scandalous stately homes



SCANDALS THAT ROCKED THE NATION

No exploration of British scandals would be complete without a mention of Cliveden in Berkshire, the setting of the Profumo Affair. It's interesting to note that Cliveden's story began with a scandal when, in 1666, George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham, built the original house as a hunting lodge to entertain his friends – and his mistress, whose husband he fatally wounded in a duel.

Three centuries later, in 1963, Cliveden became the focus of another infamous scandal. It began with a party thrown by the 3rd Viscount Astor, William, in July 1961, where the guests included the Secretary of State for War, John Profumo, and society showgirl Christine Keeler, who, as the story goes, was frolicking topless in the pool when the pair met. The three-month affair that followed was to end Profumo's career and bring down the Macmillan Conservative government. It emerged that, as well as an affair with Profumo, Keeler had a very brief relationship with Yevgeny Ivanov, a Soviet intelligence officer and assistant naval attaché.

Top to bottom:
Cliveden House;
Christine Keeler at
the height of the
Profumo Affair



This connection was seen as a grave security risk and Profumo was compelled to make a statement in the House of Commons denying there was any impropriety in his relationship with Keeler. When his lie was exposed, he was forced to resign. In the aftermath,

Stephen Ward, the osteopath who introduced Profumo to Keeler, killed himself – a potent reminder of the human cost to some of history's most scandalous stories.

On a happier note: had Edward's romance with Wallis Simpson not blossomed back at Fort Belvedere, our current Queen may not be on the throne today. Stately scandals are more than mere sources of tittle-tattle and entertainment: they can change history. ■

For more on Britain's magnificent stately homes, visit www.discoverbritainmag.com



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www.seeitdoitsunderland.co.uk



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The keeper of her heart

Historian **Nigel Jones** visits Kenilworth Castle in Warwickshire, scene of the longest siege in English history 750 years ago and later the beautiful backdrop to a remarkable royal romance





It is the high summer of July 1575 when England's weather is at its brief, glorious best. The majestic Kenilworth Castle in the kingdom's heartland county of Warwickshire has been transformed from a forbidding medieval fortress built for war into a house and garden of peace and earthly delights.

The castle's keeper, Robert Dudley, 1st Earl of Leicester, has spared no expense. In fact, he is reputedly spending £1,000 a day – worth around £650,000 today – in laying on lavish spectacles for his royal guest's three-week visit. For the visitor is none other than Queen Elizabeth I, and Dudley has his own special reasons for staging Elizabethan England's most eye-catching celebrations in Gloriana's honour.

Dudley has had the park surrounding the castle freshly stocked with deer for the queen – a keen huntswoman – to pursue; and the lake or Great Mere girding the walls is filled with wildfowl to trap or shoot. He has had a beautiful privy knot garden – meticulously recreated by

English Heritage – expensively planted for the queen's pleasure complete, according to a contemporary report, with tall trees and “many shady bowers, arbours, seats and walks” perfumed by flowers.

The garden and a viewing terrace are adorned with obelisks, and the centrepiece is a spectacular white fountain made from Tuscan Carrara marble. The Great Mere is the scene of nightly masques and entertainments, consisting on one evening of floating islands populated by nymphs and a giant 18-foot mermaid, and, on another, a deafening firework display heard 20 miles away.

Sometimes locals are allowed in to watch the fun – and it is possible the young Shakespeare, a lad of 11 living in nearby Stratford-upon-Avon, was among them, since scenes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are thought to be based on the Kenilworth spectacular.

In addition to these transient productions, Dudley has made permanent alterations to Kenilworth's structure that will long outlast the queen's visit, including constructing

Previous page, main image:

Leicester's Gatehouse

Inset: Elizabeth I and Robert Dudley

This page, above, left to right:

Kenilworth Castle today; an engraving of Elizabeth I's grand arrival at Kenilworth in 1575

Right: The castle's reconstructed Elizabethan garden





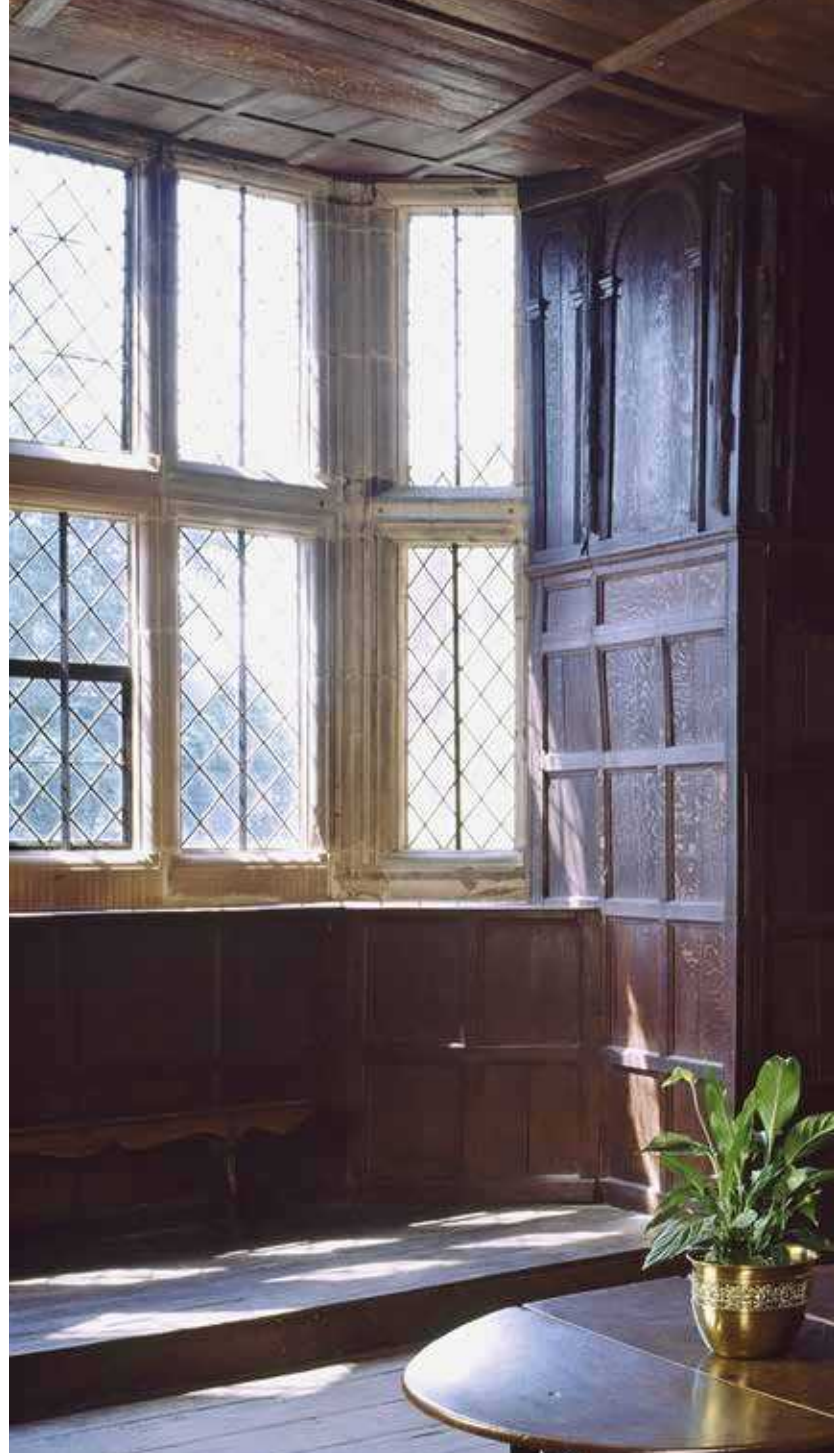
Leicester's Building, a tall block of luxury apartments where the queen and her attendants are lodged, and Leicester's Gatehouse, a new grand entrance to the estate. Even allowing for Elizabeth's extravagant tastes, these expensive arrangements far exceed what even the wealthiest courtier would be expected to provide during one of her progresses around her realm, so why has Dudley almost bankrupted himself?

Dudley was the love of the Virgin Queen's life. The deep and lasting relationship between the pair was forged in their formative years. In the 1550s under the shadow of execution, though both little more than teenagers, Dudley and Elizabeth were accused of treason and imprisoned in the Tower of London by Elizabeth's half-sister, Mary I, and they saw a lot of each other during this time.

Dudley saw his father and brother beheaded, and only narrowly escaped the block himself, while Elizabeth also avoided the axe by a whisker. The bond would last a lifetime until Dudley's death in 1588. ➤

Warwickshire

Below: Queen Isabella at Hereford in 1326 during her invasion of England which would force her husband, King Edward II, to abdicate at Kenilworth Castle
Below, right: The castle's privy knot garden as it looks today



The liaison between monarch and favourite survived severe strains but never ended in the marriage that both secretly wished for. However much she loved the dynamic Dudley, Elizabeth knew that the handsome magnate would never be content with a submissive consort's role – and she would share her personal power with no man.

The combative Dudley made many enemies and was, probably unfairly, suspected of murdering his first wife, Amy Robsart, to clear the way for him to wed the queen. Elizabeth knew that, whatever her private passion, marrying such a controversial figure would spark a scandal that might well bring her down.

So if Dudley's extravaganza at Kenilworth was his last bid to woo the queen, it was money spent in vain.

The Elizabethan era was a peaceful interlude at Kenilworth between a violent past and future. Built in the 1120s by King Henry I's Lord Chamberlain Geoffrey de Clinton, the castle was the scene of the largest and longest siege in English history in 1266 when it was the last





For more on Britain's most romantic castles, see www.discoverbritainmag.com/romantic_ruins

stronghold of the Barons who, under Simon de Montfort, had rebelled against Henry III's misrule. The Baronial garrison held out for an incredible six months against the royal army after de Montfort's death until they were eventually starved into submission.

A favourite residence of English kings, Kenilworth witnessed the inglorious end of one monarch's reign when Edward II was compelled to sign his abdication in the castle in 1326 after he was deposed by his queen, Isabella, and her lover, Roger Mortimer.

Another famous Kenilworth anecdote is depicted by Shakespeare at the beginning of *Henry V*. The story went that the arrival of a gift of tennis balls in 1415, a mocking present unwisely sent by the French court to taunt Henry, prompted the enraged king to return the message that he would send back "gun-stones" or cannon balls in return – and to launch his victorious Agincourt campaign.

A Lancastrian bastion during the Wars of the Roses, Kenilworth's last military hurrah came during the English

Civil War when it changed hands between the warring Roundheads and Cavaliers before Parliament finally ordered the great fortress's "slighting" – or deliberate destruction – in 1649.

But more than enough remains intact at the castle – including Leicester's Building and Gatehouse and the Great Hall – to allow Kenilworth's thousands of visitors to experience a romantic slice of English history that they are unlikely to forget. ■

Above: The Elizabethan fireplace in Leicester's Gatehouse. Spot the "R" and "L" for "Robert" and "Leicester"

DISCOVER MORE

Relive the royal romance between Queen Elizabeth I and Robert Dudley, in an exhibition on the top floor of Leicester's Gatehouse at Kenilworth Castle. Explore the Elizabethan bedroom and Oak Room, which contains an ornate alabaster fireplace (above). Over the fireplace is a grand wooden carving, which in a previous life was once the headboard of a bed thought to have belonged to Elizabeth I on her stay in 1575. www.english-heritage.org.uk



Left: The British bowler has become a style classic around the world

Below: Prince William sports a bowler on Cavalry Sunday

Picture Winston Churchill, Charlie Chaplin, or the quintessential English gent on his way to work in the City. What are they wearing on their heads? The chances are you imagined them in that hard felt hat with a rounded crown and narrow brim known as the bowler or, in some circles, the Coke (pronounced “cook”).

The bowler has travelled widely since its beginnings in London in 1849. Appropriated by everyone from cowboys in the American West to Quechua women in Bolivia, who were introduced to the hat by British railway workers in the 1920s, the iconic piece of headwear began with two men called – perhaps unsurprisingly – Edward Coke and Thomas Bowler.

Coke, the younger brother of the 2nd Earl of Leicester, walked into the famous London hat-makers Lock & Co with a problem. The top hats worn by his gamekeepers on the Holkham Hall estate in Norfolk kept falling off but they needed to wear something to protect their heads from low-hanging branches and poacher attacks.

Bowler, Lock’s chief hat-maker, rose to the challenge and put together a prototype. To test the hat’s strength, the story goes that Coke threw it on the floor and jumped up and down on it. The resilient bowler passed with flying colours and Coke paid 12 shillings for it.

The bowler’s combination of practicality and style has made it appeal to a wide range of people throughout its history. Railway workers and American cowboys – think Butch Cassidy or Billy

HAT TRICK

Alice Rush investigates the story of the iconic British bowler

“It came to epitomise the ‘City gent’ – along with a pinstripe suit and a black umbrella”

the Kid – adopted it as their own because it would not blow off easily when they were on horseback or hanging their heads from the windows of speeding trains.

Derby-goers also loved the bowler, as did those wishing to rise through the social ranks, and the hat became known as the Derby in the US.

In Britain, the bowler was first worn by the Victorian working classes but by the 1950s and 1960s it came to epitomise the “City gent” – along with a pinstripe suit and a black umbrella. When George Banks, the stern workaholic father in *Mary Poppins*, is sacked from his job at the bank, his bowler is ceremoniously punched in.

Today, cavalry officers still wear bowler hats and suits for their annual parade in Hyde Park on what is known as Cavalry Sunday in May – both Princes William and Harry have worn them for official purposes.

The tradition stems from the fact the outfit was considered correct dress just before the First World War and officers are still expected to wear their City gent attire whenever they are in London on duty.

One of Britain’s most famous hat devotees, Winston Churchill is known to have favoured the Homburg, but he pulled off a bowler with aplomb. To this day, Lock & Co still sell thousands of Cokes each year to City workers and ex-military customers, while the Earl of Leicester continues to buy the hat to which his ancestor gave his name for his gamekeepers on the completion of one year’s service. ■

www.lockhatters.co.uk



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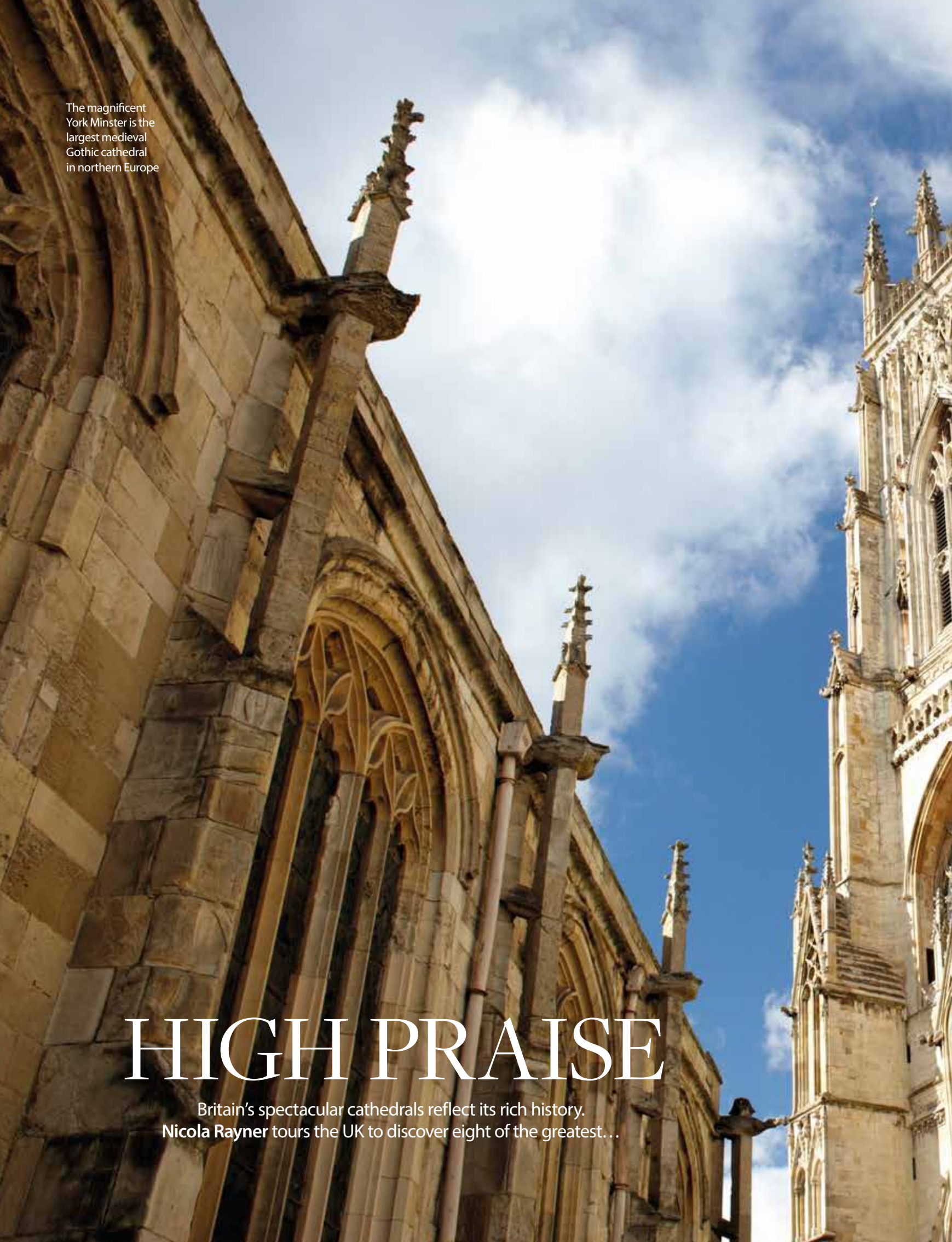


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HIGH PRAISE

Britain's spectacular cathedrals reflect its rich history.
Nicola Rayner tours the UK to discover eight of the greatest...

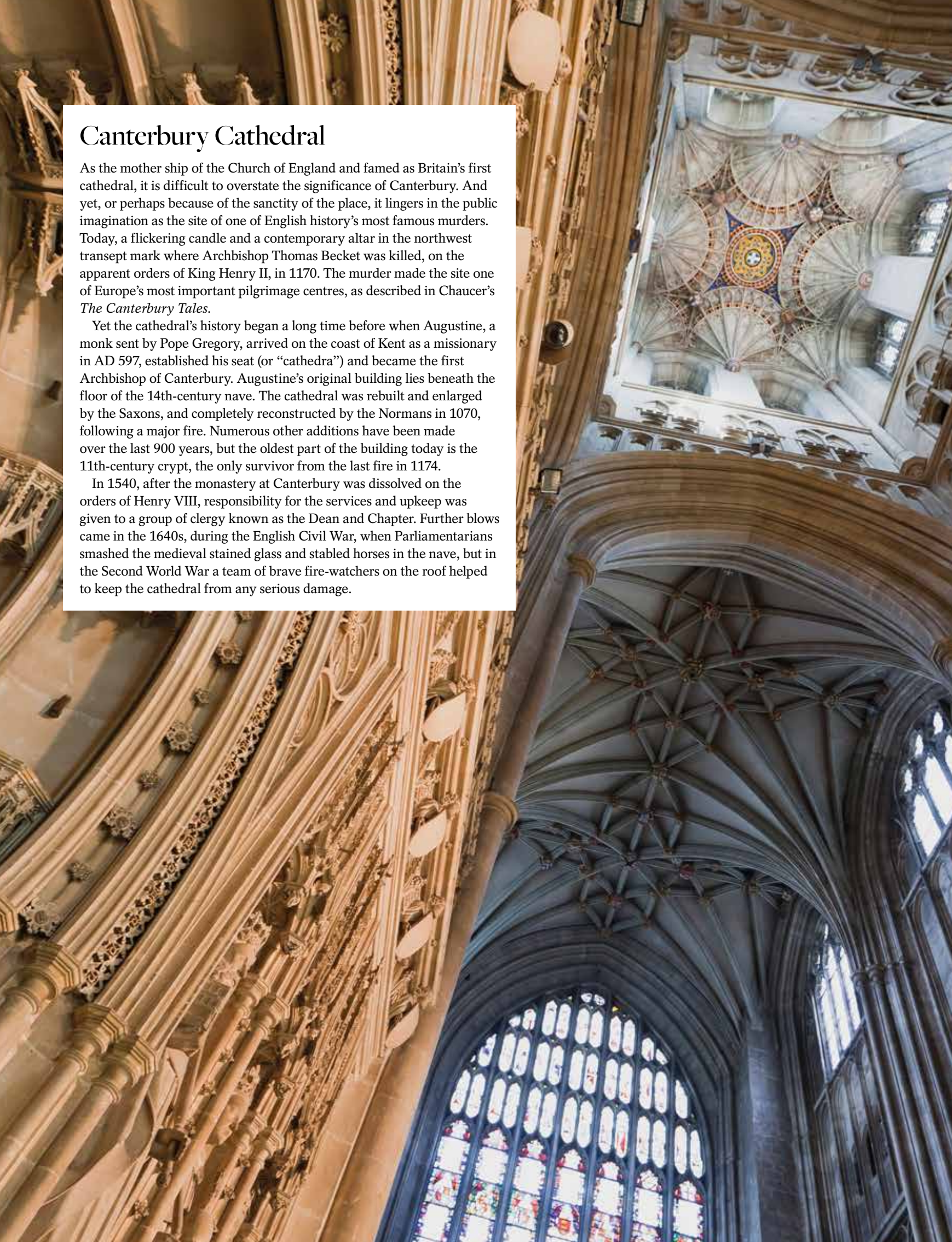


Canterbury Cathedral

As the mother ship of the Church of England and famed as Britain's first cathedral, it is difficult to overstate the significance of Canterbury. And yet, or perhaps because of the sanctity of the place, it lingers in the public imagination as the site of one of English history's most famous murders. Today, a flickering candle and a contemporary altar in the northwest transept mark where Archbishop Thomas Becket was killed, on the apparent orders of King Henry II, in 1170. The murder made the site one of Europe's most important pilgrimage centres, as described in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.

Yet the cathedral's history began a long time before when Augustine, a monk sent by Pope Gregory, arrived on the coast of Kent as a missionary in AD 597, established his seat (or "cathedra") and became the first Archbishop of Canterbury. Augustine's original building lies beneath the floor of the 14th-century nave. The cathedral was rebuilt and enlarged by the Saxons, and completely reconstructed by the Normans in 1070, following a major fire. Numerous other additions have been made over the last 900 years, but the oldest part of the building today is the 11th-century crypt, the only survivor from the last fire in 1174.

In 1540, after the monastery at Canterbury was dissolved on the orders of Henry VIII, responsibility for the services and upkeep was given to a group of clergy known as the Dean and Chapter. Further blows came in the 1640s, during the English Civil War, when Parliamentarians smashed the medieval stained glass and stabled horses in the nave, but in the Second World War a team of brave fire-watchers on the roof helped to keep the cathedral from any serious damage.





The dramatic ceiling of Canterbury Cathedral, which was founded in AD 597

MAP ILLUSTRATION: LISA HELLIER



VISITBRITAIN/BRITAIN ON VIEW/TERENCE WAELAND/DESIGN PICS/CORBIS

Britain's cathedrals tell stories in stone. Through their soaring structures British history can be traced from the Norman conquest of 1066 through to the aftermath of the Second World War when modern cathedrals such as Coventry rose phoenix-like from the bombed ruins of their predecessors.

In the 11th and 12th centuries, a frenzy of construction followed William the Conqueror's victory at the Battle of Hastings. The Normans were famed for their castles, but they also erected religious buildings: monasteries, cathedrals and abbeys. With the Normans' Romanesque architecture featuring rounded arches, hefty pillars and truly epic proportions, the construction emphasised their power in a way that has been compared with the early skyscrapers of New York.

In the Middle Ages the Church enjoyed immense power and wealth,

and cathedrals, the seats of bishops, were the symbols of its dominant role in British society. However, with the English Reformation in the 1500s, things changed. After Henry VIII split from Rome, which had refused his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, and declared himself head of the Church of England in 1534, monasteries were dissolved and their land sold to anyone who could pay.

Irreplaceable treasures – the elaborate shrine of St Cuthbert in Durham, for instance – were stripped from cathedrals and monasteries and the riches used to replenish the royal coffers. The running of cathedrals, such as Canterbury, changed too. It's possible to trace key parts of Britain's history through its cathedrals: of those who invaded our island nation; of those in power or those who lost it; of conflict and change. Here is our pick of eight of the greatest, which are all still working churches today... ➤

Cathedrals



St Davids Cathedral sits in a hollow in Britain's smallest city

York Minster

Towering above York's maze of ancient streets stands the largest medieval cathedral in northern Europe. For full effect, approach York Minster from the Shambles, an ancient cobbled street that has been called Britain's prettiest.

Although the first church on the site was a wooden chapel built for the baptism of King Edwin of Northumbria in 627, the present Gothic incarnation, with pointed arches, flying buttresses and intricate sculptures (right), was built largely between 1220 and 1480.

Distinguishing the Gothic style from its Romanesque predecessor, huge stained glass windows abound in York. The jewel in the crown is the largest single expanse of medieval stained glass in the country: the Great East Window. Dating from 1405 and roughly the size of a tennis court, the masterpiece created by John Thornton is currently undergoing extensive restoration. In the south transept the Rose Window commemorates the union of the Houses of Lancaster and York through the marriage of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, which ended the Wars of the Roses and marked the beginnings of the Tudor dynasty. And don't miss the exhibition *Revealing York Minster in the Undercroft*, which traces the city's 2,000-year history.



St Davids Cathedral

Nestled in a hollow in Britain's smallest city, St Davids, the most holy site in Wales which houses the shrine of its patron saint, looks, at first glance, as if it's hiding. That's no accident: the location was chosen in the hope that it would avoid Viking raids. A vain hope as it turns out: the site has been ransacked at least seven times, with Bishop Morgenau killed by Vikings in AD 999, and Bishop Abraham meeting a similarly grisly end in 1080.

A monastery was founded on the site in the 6th century by St David himself, who lived, died and was buried in this most westerly part of Wales. In 1090, Rhigyfarch's *Life of David* made a crucial contribution to the cult of St Davids, with Pope Calixtus II decreeing in 1123: "Two pilgrimages to St Davids are equal to one to Rome, and three pilgrimages to one to Jerusalem."

A new cathedral was quickly constructed in 1181, which has been visited by everyone from King Alfred and a penitent Henry II to our current monarch and Prince of Wales.

The ruins of the Bishop's Palace, a victim of the Reformation, are testament to St Davids' dramatic history. Nevertheless, there's a tranquil magic to the place, where the sea's proximity is recorded in carved figures on the misericords in the choir, which depict pilgrims being seasick (left).





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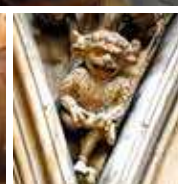
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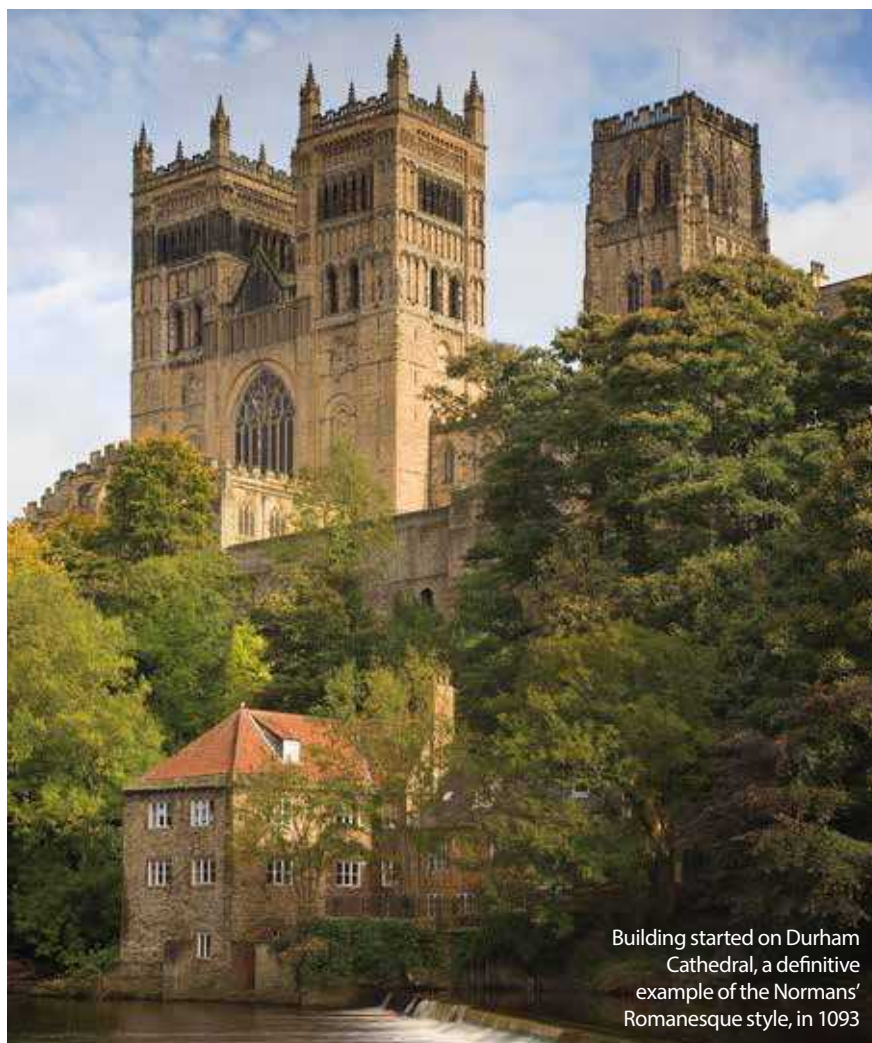
Durham Cathedral

The beginnings of Durham Cathedral are inextricably linked with the story of St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne. According to the 8th-century monk and scholar Bede, it was the long-dead saint who picked his final resting place: as his community roamed the north of England fleeing the Vikings, his coffin became immobile at a bend in the River Wear that Durham Cathedral overlooks today.

The present Norman structure replaced the 10th-century “White Church” built to house the shrine. Sitting atop a rocky promontory, the enormous structure, which was started in 1093 and took 40 years to complete, encapsulates the might of the conquering Normans. In its day, it was the largest building in northern Europe.

Along with Durham Castle – built as the residence for the Bishop of Durham who stands at the right hand of the monarch at coronations – the area was designated a Unesco World Heritage Site in 1986. In addition to the relics of St Cuthbert, the treasures of Durham Cathedral include the remains of the Venerable Bede, credited with introducing the numbering of the years since the birth of Jesus, and the riches of the cathedral’s library.

Architecture buffs will drool over what are believed to be the world’s first structural pointed arches in the nave, while, historically, more roguish types would make for the Sanctuary Knecker on the north door. Those who grasped the ornamental ring in the knecker’s mouth would receive 37 days’ sanctuary – though that rule was abolished in 1624.



Building started on Durham Cathedral, a definitive example of the Normans’ Romanesque style, in 1093



Lincoln Cathedral

Hiding in the upper reaches of the Gothic cathedral, the famous Lincoln imp (left) might come as a surprise to the first-time visitor. The story goes that the cheeky chap was wreaking havoc in the building until it was turned to stone by an angel.

Described by Victorian writer John Ruskin as “out and out the most precious piece of architecture in the British Isles and roughly speaking worth any two other cathedrals we have,” Lincoln was also once the tallest building in the world, taking the mantle from the Great Pyramid of Giza until 1549 when the central tower’s spire collapsed. Look out for a pair of stunning stained glass windows known as the Dean’s Eye and the Bishop’s Eye and intricate carvings of angels on the eponymous Angel Choir, and do visit the Chapter House where Edward I held his parliament and the 2005 film *The Da Vinci Code* was filmed. ➤



Winchester Cathedral has one of the longest medieval naves in Europe

VISITBRITAIN/ROD EDWARDS/ALAMY/MATTHEW HARRISON/ISLANDSTOCK/SHUTTERSTOCK/ADAM BURTON/AWL/VISIT ENGLAND/CITY OF LONDON/CLIVETOTMAN

AT A GLANCE...

Salisbury Cathedral has the **tallest church spire** in Britain at 123m, but Winchester boasts the **longest nave** (164m). York is the **largest medieval cathedral** in northern Europe with the **largest expanse of medieval stained glass** – the size of a tennis court – but bijou St Davids sits in our **tiniest city**. For more facts and figures, see www.discoverbritainmag.com



Winchester Cathedral

The cathedral with one of the longest naves in Europe also has a rich history to crow about – the elegant Hampshire city of Winchester was once the most important settlement in the Saxon kingdom of Wessex. King Alfred the Great made it his capital in the 9th century and was buried at Old Minster, whose outline is traced in red brick just north of the present cathedral.

Also buried there were the bones of St Swithun, a legendary healer, whose tomb used to be surrounded by the crutches of those he had cured. Today, he's best known for "his" day on 15

“Don't miss the gravestone of Jane Austen, who died a stone's throw away”

July when Brits watch the skies closely: as tradition has it that the weather on that day will continue for the next 40.

The arrival of the Normans saw the demolition of Old Minster with its stones used for the new cathedral, consecrated in 1093. The dissolution of

England's monasteries during the 1530s under Henry VIII proved catastrophic for the monastic community. Winchester was refounded as a cathedral and its

Benedictine monastery, St Swithun's Priory, was closed: the shrine of its patron saint was ransacked and its cloister demolished.

Don't miss the gravestone of Jane Austen, who died a stone's throw away from the cathedral in 1817.

Salisbury Cathedral sports the tallest spire in Britain
Right: Iconic St Paul's still defines the London skyline

Salisbury Cathedral

Salisbury Cathedral boasts not only the tallest church spire in Britain, but possibly the oldest working clock in the world, which dates from 1386.

One of Britain's finest medieval cathedrals, Salisbury was built between 1220 and 1258, replacing the first incarnation at Old Sarum just down the road. Scarce water supplies and disputes with the military inhabitants of the nearby castle caused the Bishop of Salisbury to make the move. A fanciful tale says he stood on the castle mound at Old Sarum and shot an arrow to determine the spot for his next cathedral.

The spectacular 123m tower was added in the mid-14th century and proved an epic technical challenge to build – Sir Christopher Wren surveyed its “wonkiness” in 1668. It is possible to take a Tower Tour up the 332 steps to the top of the spire, where the views are breathtaking.

At the eastern end of the ambulatory the Prisoners of Conscience stained glass window can be found above the ornate tomb of Edward Seymour, the nephew of Jane, Henry VIII's third wife, and his spouse, Lady Catherine Grey, whose sister, the Tudor monarch Lady Jane Grey, is best known as the Nine Day Queen. The Chapter House at Salisbury is home to one of four surviving copies of 1215's Magna Carta.



St Paul's Cathedral

No list of great British cathedrals would be complete without St Paul's, whose famous dome is a much-loved part of the London skyline. That the awe-inspiring structure is Sir Christopher Wren's magnum opus is recalled in an inscription in Latin on his gravestone in the crypt, which translates as: “If you seek his memorial, look around you.” Keeping Wren company are memorials to the Duke of Wellington and Admiral Lord Nelson, whose body lies beneath the dome. The funerals of both were held at St Paul's, as well as the wedding of Princes Charles and Lady Diana Spencer.

The “newest” cathedral featured here, St Paul's was built after the Great Fire of London in 1666 destroyed its predecessor. Among its must-sees are the Whispering Gallery and the Golden Gallery, which offers astonishing views of the city below. ■

DOWN CATHEDRAL



Built in 1183 as a Benedictine monastery, Down Cathedral is now a Cathedral of the Church of Ireland. Prominent and majestic, the cathedral is believed to have the grave of St Patrick in its grounds. There is also wonderful stained glass and a pulpit and organ of highest quality.

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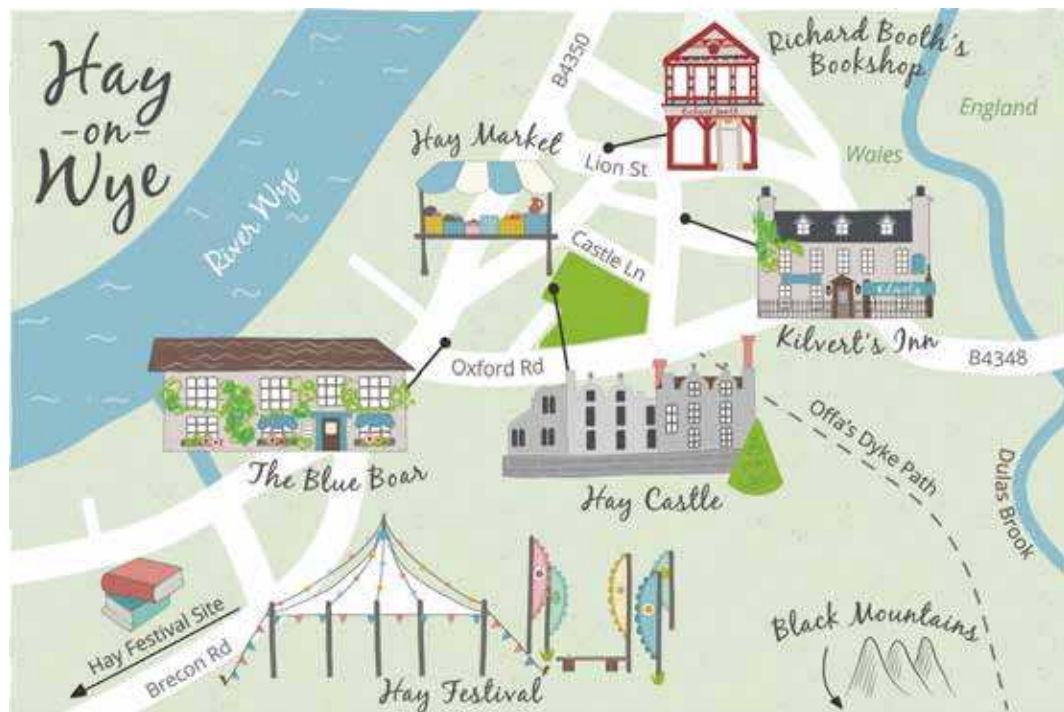
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Hay fever

The Welsh town of Hay-on-Wye is a book-lover's paradise, welcoming visitors from all over the world to its charming literary festival every summer. **Sally Hales** tells its story



MAP ILLUSTRATION: BEK CRUDDACE

Wales

Meander through the huddle of streets around the town's castle, with the River Wye sweeping past in the north, the Black Mountains in the south and the Brecon Beacons in the west, and you are sure to be charmed by Hay-on-Wye's quaint beauty and historic charm.

But spend a little more time ducking in and out of the wealth of quirky shops, tearooms, cosy pubs and, famously, huge number of secondhand and antiquarian booksellers, and you will soon be captured by the town's other defining quality: its spirit of independence.

Indeed, this small settlement with a population of around 1,500 claims the grand title of Independent Kingdom of Hay: Town of Books.

A marcher market town, Hay sits between England and Wales – while most of the town is in Wales, the border follows the wandering Dulas Brook sending some of its eastern flanks into England. Throughout its long history as a watering hole, market town and important military garrison, the fortunes of the town and its castle have been entwined.

Built in the late 12th century, Hay Castle is one of the great medieval defence structures along the border still standing. Sacked by Llewelyn II, the last native prince of Wales, in 1233, and then rebuilt by Henry III, the castle's marchland position saw it endure centuries of turmoil. It was sacked by legendary Welsh leader Owain Glyndŵr and his forces in the early 15th century as he travelled south after his victory at the Battle of Pilleth, and thereafter passed into the hands of the Earls of Stafford, later the Dukes of Buckingham. The last duke, executed by Henry VIII in 1521, remodelled the keep, before James Boyle of Hereford built a Jacobean mansion, Castle House, next to it in the 1660s.

The castle site, with its four-storey keep, Norman gate, Jacobean manor house, cottage, outbuildings, stables and gaggle of shops, still sits casting a watchful eye over the surrounding town. It is a testament to the town's spirit that, even in its later incarnation as a sleepy, romantic ruin, the castle has been the site of political machinations, as well as – channelling the town's twin passions – housing a famous independent bookshop.

Today Hay Castle is home to an honesty bookshop – a delightful outdoor space to read, relax and browse the

wonky rows of reading matter where payment is left in a collecting box – along with several other independent traders peddling arts, crafts and other wares.

The honesty bookshop has been a tradition since the 1960s, when a young man called Richard Booth kickstarted Hay's trajectory toward global fame as the world's first town of books, bibliophile's paradise and “independent kingdom”.

Having inherited the nearby Brynmelyn estate from his uncle, Major Willie Booth, in 1961, Booth opened a secondhand bookshop in the town's old fire station. He shipped containers of books from the US, where libraries were closing. In 1965 he bought the cinema and turned that into a bookshop. He claimed the castle, too. Others followed his lead and soon books were everywhere.

By the 1970s Hay had garnered an international

reputation as a book town with dozens of bookshops jostling for attention along its winding streets. But Booth's biggest Hay-making high jinks were yet to come.

On 1 April 1977, the people of Hay came together to declare Unilateral Independence, with one Richard Booth ceremonially proclaimed its king. With his cardboard crown and a sceptre made from a ballcock, King Richard Cœur de Livre made his horse prime minister. But what seemed to be an April Fool's prank was also a sincere

bid to put the town on the map and to rally support for local businesses. And, though the “king” has since been overthrown in a later stunt in 2009, the plan worked: the Kingdom of Hay, the world's first book town, was born.

If Hay's literary infancy was nurtured by the dynamic Booth, it came of age in 1987 with the launch of the Hay Festival. Allegedly founded around a kitchen table with £100 won in a poker game, the book festival has grown from welcoming a few hundred people in its early years to the colossus it is today. For 10 days in late May and early June, hospitable Hay plays the perfect host to the lauded literati who swell the population by more than 100,000 as novelists, poets, politicians and musicians from across the globe arrive to speak, celebrate and mingle with the book-loving masses.

With festival-goers reading in the early summer sun and wandering in and out of makeshift bookshops and venues, the laidback party atmosphere prompted one ➤



Previous page:

The honesty bookshop at Hay Castle

Clockwise from

top right: The view over Hay-on-Wye with Hay Castle at the centre of the town; book-lovers at the Hay Festival; quirky bookshops line the streets





Wales

of its most high-profile guests, former US president Bill Clinton, to dub it the “Woodstock of the mind”.

While the number of bookshops in Hay has fallen in recent years, its spirit of survival is undiminished and many have thrived by diversifying their offerings while retaining their fierce independence and singular charms.

No visit to Hay is complete without a browse in Richard Booth's Bookshop in Lion Street, one of several named after and established by the man himself. A treasure trove of literary spoils, its shelves are packed with an eclectic array of books from rarities to contemporary works, all complemented by cosy seating perfect for contemplation. The building also houses a small arthouse cinema and a café, so there would barely be a reason to leave if it were not for the other tempting purveyors of books that line the street outside.

“Kindles are banned from the Kingdom of Hay” declares a defiant sign outside the pretty stone-built Addyman's bookshop, which specialises in modern first editions. Addyman's is actually three separate shops, the original shop having been joined by the Addyman Annexe, whose traditional shopfront belies the somewhat racier material inside, and Murder and Mayhem (right), with a spectacular Gothic frontage celebrating its passion for crime, horror and detective fiction. But it is the beautiful black-and-white exterior of Hay on Wye Booksellers in High Town, with its 15th-century panelling and traditional swinging sign, that has become the most potent image of the town, perfectly encapsulating its quirky, bookish delights.

And Hay-on-Wye is much more than a bibliophile's dream town. Its location on the road to Brecon – once

the most important town for miles around – means it has a long history of providing sustenance and lodging to tired travellers as well as to those visiting Hay's historic market, which has drawn crowds from the surrounding rural areas for centuries.

Indeed, Hay Market still thrives today. Roll into town on a Thursday and you'll find bountiful stalls sitting in the shadow of the castle offering everything from crafts and antiques to fruit and vegetables. When it's time to take a rest from the browsing, head to the Blue Boar, which occupies a prime position on the corner of Castle Street and Oxford Road. Inside a fire roars and a convivial

atmosphere is served up with the hearty food and reviving pints.

Back on Market Street is the famous Kilvert's Inn, a cosy three-storey pub with lovely garden views over the Black Mountains and town square. A former doctor's house built during the Edwardian period, the pub is named after one of its former residents, Francis Kilvert, whose popular diaries recorded his

rural rambles to the delights of his fascinated Edwardian readership. Indeed, Kilvert's Inn is just a few short steps from the Offa's Dyke Path, where ramblers can walk the length of the 8th-century defensive earthwork which marked the boundary between England and Wales.

Hay may be famous for books but it has much more to entice visitors: its location just inside the Brecon Beacons National Park means stunning scenery envelopes the town while, ever keen to start a new chapter, Hay has broadened its horizons and is now home to several other festivals. With all you need to keep the mind inspired and the body busy, a trip to Hay-on-Wye is sure to offer much more than the same old story. ■

“The castle has been the site of political machinations, as well as being home to a famous independent bookshop”



DISCOVER HAY

Visit

Explore the atmospheric ruins of nearby Llanthony Priory (far right), an early 12th-century Augustinian church, once one of the great medieval buildings in Wales, which sits in a wild and beautiful setting far up the Vale of Ewyas in the Black Mountains (www.cadw.gov.wales). A couple of miles north is Capel-y-Ffin Monastery (www.capelmonastery.co.uk). Built in 1870 to restore monastic life to the Church of England, it was bought by stone carver and typeface designer Eric Gill in 1924, who created the eponymous typeface while living there. Two headstones by Gill can be found in the churchyard of St Mary The Virgin chapel (right), built

in 1762. David Jones, the Welsh artist and poet, was also a regular visitor to this artistic enclave.

Eat and drink

The Three Tuns (www.three-tuns.com) dates back to the early 16th century. As the oldest pub in Hay-on-Wye, its unique charm makes it a popular haunt with local characters as well as famous out-of-towners. St John's Place (www.stjohnsplacehay.tumblr.com) offers a sophisticated dining experience inside the old St John's Chapel and Meeting Rooms amid the bustle of Lion Street. The traditional green-and-cream fronted Shepherds Ice Cream and Coffee Bar (www.shepherdsicecream.co.uk) throngs with customers eager for a taste of its sheep's milk ice cream as soon as the sun peeks through.



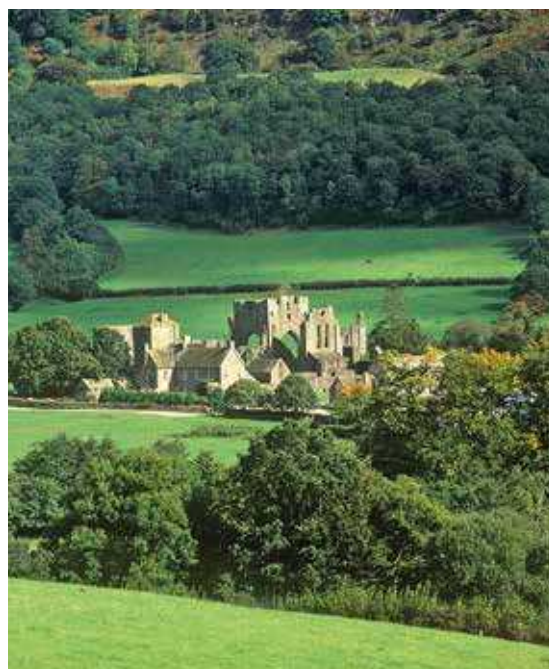


Sleep

Just moments from the vibrant centre of Hay-on-Wye, the Swan Hotel (www.swanathay.co.uk) in Church Street is a beautiful Georgian building with 17 individually designed, recently refurbished en suite bedrooms. Tinto House (www.tinto-house.co.uk) in Broad Street is a Georgian townhouse, built around 1760, with views of nearby Hay Castle.

Travel

The nearest train station is in Hereford with a direct service to London Paddington (www.nationalrail.co.uk). During the Hay Festival there is a shuttle bus service connecting Hereford train and bus station to the festival site. For more information see www.discoverbritainmag.com



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Clockwise, from top left: Lindeth Howe Country House Hotel, part of the Classic British Hotels group; The Savoy; afternoon tea at Mews of Mayfair; our winner will be chauffeured around for the day; moated Leeds Castle; a romantic bolthole with Sykes Cottages



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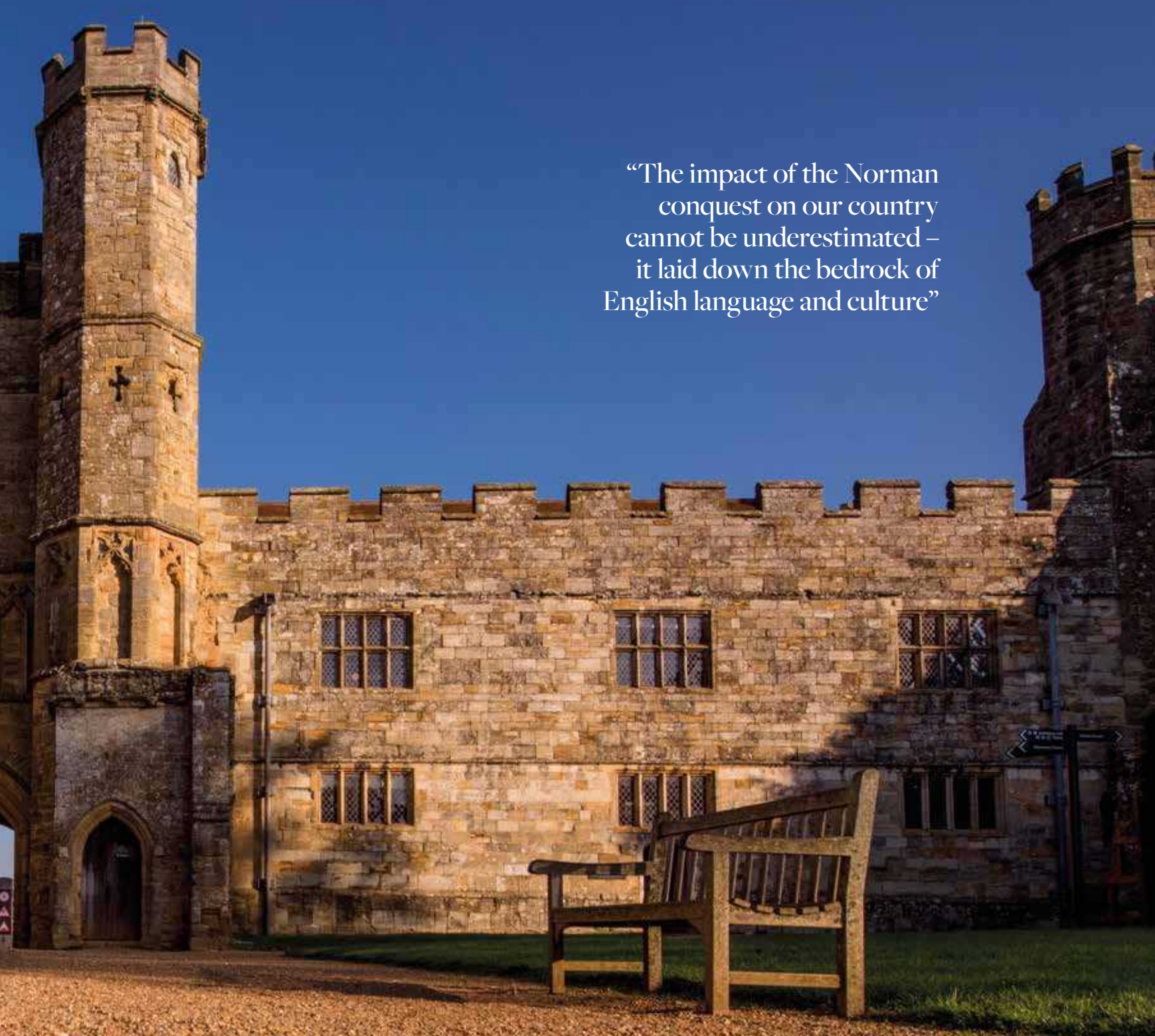
1066 and all that

This year marks the 950th anniversary of the most famous date in British history. **Alexander Larman** investigates the significance of the Battle of Hastings



Top: The Great Gatehouse at Battle Abbey **Right:** The Bayeux Tapestry tells the story of the Battle of Hastings

“The impact of the Norman conquest on our country cannot be underestimated – it laid down the bedrock of English language and culture”



Hastings



ISTOCK/GI ARCHIVE/GUY CORBISHLEY/THE PRINT COLLECTOR/ALAMY/JIM HOLDEN/ENGLISH HERITAGE

If you had to name the most famous dates in British history, it's not long before 1066 would come up, even if a recent survey suggested that under-35s were more familiar with *Game Of Thrones* than with their own past. More experienced readers might remember the year also lent itself to a book by the humorous writers WC Sellar and RJ Yeatman; *1066 And All That* has remained a schoolboy favourite since its publication in 1930.

It was nearly a millennium ago that the Battle of Hastings was fought on 14 October, resulting in the death of the English king at the time, Harold, and the successful inheritance of the throne by William of Normandy, thereafter known either as William I or William the Conqueror.

Although the battle was a defeat for the British, it has attracted a good deal of patriotic significance as a victory for a man who became one of the country's most famous kings, as well as leading to the creation of the Domesday Book, the first comprehensive survey of the livelihoods and livestock of the English nobles.

It did not hurt that William's actions were popularised by the Bayeux Tapestry – a misnomer, as it is in fact an embroidery, and one made in Britain in the 1070s rather than France – which itself created many of the most enduring myths attached to the battle. Contrary to popular belief, Harold was almost certainly not killed by an arrow to the eye. Instead, it was more likely he was cut down on the battlefield by the victorious Norman knights as his panicked forces, inferior in both numbers and training, scattered in disarray.

His death has been little mourned by historians who consider that William made a far more sophisticated and able monarch than ➤

Below: Re-enactments of the Battle of Hastings take place every October
Left: Hastings Castle, built by William the Conqueror, was a casualty of a storm
Right, top to bottom: Richard III; Charles "Bonnie Prince Charlie" Stuart





BRITAIN'S GREATEST BATTLES

Bannockburn

Although William Wallace has been seen as Scotland's national hero, thanks to the film *Braveheart*, it was in fact Robert the Bruce who achieved the more impressive victory against the English in 1314 at Bannockburn, driving them out of the country and ensuring the country's independence.

Stalling Down

Inspired by the success of the Scots at casting off the English yoke, the Welsh rose up against their neighbours in 1405, led by Owain Glyndŵr, self-proclaimed Prince of Wales. Despite valiant fighting, the English were victorious, and Glyndŵr vanished, becoming a fugitive for the rest of his life.

Bosworth

In 1485, the War of the Roses ended in spectacular fashion in Leicestershire, as the Tudor forces, led by the future Henry VII, decisively routed Richard III and the House of York. Shakespeare's play reduced it to a battle between good and evil, epitomised by the king's cry: "A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!"



Naseby

The first English Civil War of 1642-46 was fought between the efficient Parliamentarian (Roundhead) troops and the outdated Royalist (Cavalier) soldiers, and the former triumphed in 1645 at the Battle of Naseby. Although there were later skirmishes, there was no true Royalist revival.

Culloden

The Battle of Culloden in 1746 marked the last time that a Scottish army, under the dashing but ineffectual Charles "Bonnie Prince Charlie" Stuart, attempted to invade England and take the throne. Charles fled to France, unlike his supporters, who were systematically hunted down and executed.



Hastings



Top: The Bayeux Tapestry's famous depiction of a man being struck in the eye by an arrow, which for many years was believed to be King Harold
Bottom: The charming half-timbered buildings in Hastings Old Town

Harold, the last of the Anglo-Saxon kings, would ever have done, had he reigned longer than the nine months that he did.

Today, the coastal town of Hastings is one of East Sussex's most charming places to visit with its Old Town to the east – a historic and artistic quarter that is home to a clutch of museums including the acclaimed Jerwood Gallery. At the centre is the modern shopping district and to the west is St Leonards-on-Sea (commonly known as St Leonards), featuring James Burton's elegant 19th-century architecture and Norman Road with its antique shops and galleries.

The only present-day battles that take place are good-natured scuffles in the antique and craft emporia over quirky and vintage antiques and objets d'art. Nonetheless, Hastings remains keenly attuned to its historical antecedents; not for nothing is a nearby small town, the probable site of the encounter, known as Battle. It is here that visitors who wish to recapture the spectacle of 1066 can visit the peaceful field that once saw thousands of armed men charge at one another, or walk around the ruined abbey built by William as a tribute after his victory.

It is said that visitors can head to the exact spot Harold was killed, although this might be wishful thinking; for those who need more than just their imagination, the excellent visitor centre hosts an interactive exhibition that allows would-be warriors to watch a film telling the story of the battle and handle replica weapons.

For those who are keenest to see what the conflict itself would have looked like, there is a recreation in October, offering not just a

“Contrary to popular belief, Harold was almost certainly not killed by an arrow to the eye”

re-enactment of hundreds of armoured soldiers clashing and cavalry charging, but immersive events that include everything from a play that explores the run-up to the affray to milder activities such as falconry and archery. If there is the faintest of ironies in a bloodthirsty clash

being commemorated as a family day out, it is worth bearing in mind soldiers on both sides were little more than boys – a sobering thought for an excited teenager.

In this anniversary year, there are several additional events that promise to bring the bloody affair to vivid life as part of English Heritage's 1066: Year Of The Normans anniversary programme. For the first time, the roof of the Great Gatehouse of the abbey will be opened, and an exhibition staged explaining every step of the battle. Meanwhile, the re-enactment of the clash itself will take place on 15 and 16 October, and promises to be a magnificently swashbuckling affair – even the knowledge of how the battle must inevitably end will not detract from the excitement.

As English Heritage's chief executive, Kate Mavor, puts it: “The Battle of Hastings was a decisive hinge on which English history turned, defining the country's political, social and geographical landscape for centuries to come. English Heritage will mark the 950th anniversary of the Norman conquest with an exciting programme of events. Central to this will be our representation of the most famous battlefield in England.”

Nor are the commemorations purely bloodthirsty. The artistic and creative side of Hastings is represented by a new arts festival, ➤

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Hastings



Top: Hastings Old Town is brimming with history and contemporary culture
Bottom, left to right: The tall black net huts used by the town's fishermen; the 15th-century timbered Swan House, a former bakery, is now a pretty B&B

Root 1066, which will offer a range of cross-channel perspectives by English and French participants. Taking place in September and October, it will encompass everything from music to art, including specially commissioned work, and highlight the way in which Hastings has regenerated itself over the past few years into one of the southern coast's most effervescent destinations.

Highlights include a largescale sound and light experience designed by acclaimed artist Chris Levine, a community opera, *When Cultures Collide*, which has been co-created by the legendary Glyndebourne Opera company, and a new exhibition at the museum, *The Story of Hastings in 66 Objects*.

Reflecting this near-embarrassment of cultural and historical riches, one of the organisers, Peter Chowney, says: "The impact of the Norman conquest on our country cannot be underestimated; it laid down the bedrock of English language and culture. That's why we've called the festival 'Root' 1066. It demonstrates just how diverse we are as a nation."

This is certainly true, but what's equally the case is that the festivals have the daunting task of attempting to illuminate one of British history's most significant incidents and to speak as much to the 21st century as they do to the 11th. Given the widespread appeal of the events planned, it seems entirely likely that they will be an enormous success, and that this real-life *Game Of Thrones* saga will take on a new, and altogether contemporary, resonance. ■

www.english-heritage.co.uk/1066; www.1066contemporary.com

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DISCOVER HASTINGS

Visit

In addition to the Jerwood Gallery (www.jerwoodgallery.org) at the end of the Stade, which boasts a rich collection of 20th and 21st century British art, Hastings' museums, such as the Shipwreck Museum (www.shipwreckmuseum.co.uk) and Fishermen's Museum (www.hastingsfish.co.uk) recall its maritime heritage. Hastings Museum and Gallery (www.hmag.org.uk), just west of the train station, is housed in a handsome red-brick mansion. For more Norman history, visit Hastings Castle (www.visit1066country.com), built by William the Conqueror but a casualty of the Great Storm of 1287, which also ruined the harbour.

Eat and drink

Hastings is home to one of the largest beach-launched fishing fleets in Europe. Look out for the tall black net huts (above left), which store the fishermen's equipment, or visit the town's bustling fish market. It was on such a trip that chef Nick Hales was inspired to open his Michelin-recognised restaurant, St Clement's



(www.stclementsrestaurant.co.uk), at St Leonards-on-Sea which puts locally caught fish at the heart of its menu. Alastair Hendy's shop and kitchen (www.aghendy.com) is also a much-loved institution. As you'd expect from a seafaring settlement, you'll also be spoilt for choice of historic pubs. Ye Olde Pump House (www.yeoldepumphouse.com) in George Street is one of the prettiest, while the Stag Inn in All Saints Street dates from 1547 (www.shepherdneame.co.uk), with a Tudor oak-beamed ceiling and a secret passage in its cellar believed to have been used by smugglers.



Sleep

B&Bs don't come prettier than the Swan House (www.swanhousehastings.co.uk) in the heart of Hastings Old Town. Built in 1490, the timbered building (above) once housed a bakery and now has guest rooms that epitomise vintage chic. A more traditional décor is favoured by the 18th-century Old Rectory in Harold Road (www.theoldrectoryhastings.co.uk) or for Arts and Crafts style try Two Caple Gardens in St Leonards-on-Sea (www.caplegardens.co.uk), where the art and furnishings are made by locals.

Travel

On the southern coast of England, Hastings takes around 100 minutes to reach from London by rail. Direct trains leave regularly from Charing Cross and London Victoria, as daily buses do from Victoria Coach Station. The simplest route by car from London is via the A21 – the journey takes around two hours. For an unusual way to get around, try the Victorian funiculars, known as the East Hill and West Hill Cliff Railways (www.visit1066country.com). See www.discoverbritainmag.com for more on travel in East Sussex.

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ENGLISH HERITAGE

1066 BATTLE OF HASTINGS

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The Coach House Restaurant serves a variety of delicious food throughout the day from morning coffee and light lunches to cooked meals and afternoon tea.

The Stable Yard is also the home to 10 unique shops, offering a range of exclusive shops offering beautifully designed gifts, jewellery, toys, art and a host of indulgent treats.



Stable Yard Shops and Restaurant



In 2016, Hatfield House will be commemorating the 100th anniversary of the first official tank trials which took place in the Park in February 1916. A replica Mark IV tank will be on display in the Park throughout the visitor season with information boards and an accompanying exhibition in the Library explaining the history of the Tank and its links to Hatfield House.

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PUTTING ON THE RITZ

To celebrate its 110th anniversary this year, the iconic Ritz hotel is joining forces with other organisations to highlight the Best of British. Guests can sample its world-famous hospitality on the go with exclusive Ritz-hosted packages at the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations at Windsor, Royal Ascot and, for the ultimate summer treat, at the Wimbledon Championships. As part of a three-night stay at Wimbledon in July, guests will attend the women's quarter-finals and enjoy sky-view hospitality, served by a private butler, as they are elevated above the crowds, as well as all the tensions and dramas of Centre Court.

www.theritzlondon.com



A THING OF WONDER

It's a huge celebratory year for Shakespeare lovers and also a time of change at the Globe on the South Bank. The oak-and-thatch replica of the original open-air Elizabethan theatre welcomes a new artistic director, Emma Rice, whose

first "Wonder" summer season opens on 30 April with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – the perfect choice for long summer nights. Plus, look out for Lez Brotherston's magical forest spilling from the Globe on to London's Bankside. www.shakespearesglobe.com/wonder



CEILING THE DEAL

For the first time since 1639, an artist is working on the ceiling of the Great Hall of the Queen's House in Greenwich. The last person to do so was the Florentine artist Orazio Gentileschi, who created a series of nine paintings that were removed in 1708 and given by Queen Anne to Sarah Churchill. The canvases were installed in Marlborough House, where they remain to this day. Now Turner Prize winner Richard Wright treads in Gentileschi's footsteps, creating a unique design that will cover the nine blank panels of the ceiling. Wright will work with a team to produce an intricate gold leaf pattern similar to his Stairwell Project in Edinburgh (left), which will be unveiled when the Queen's House re-opens in July. www.rmg.co.uk/queens-house



MAIL TRAIL

From a horse-drawn mail coach in iconic pillar-box red to the Post Office salvage squad that braved the Blitz and even its former feline employees, the Postal Museum, London's newest heritage attraction, will cover the Royal Mail's 500-year history. Opening early next year, the £26 million project will be divided into two parts: the museum and Mail Rail – an attraction that will transport visitors through the disused miniature tunnels, deep under London's streets, through which letters used to be transported. www.postalmuseum.org

EVEN MORE MODERN

The home of the UK's collection of modern and contemporary art, Tate Modern has been an unmissable attraction since it opened in the former Bankside Power Station in 2000. This summer, the iconic site will unveil a new look with the opening of its extension. The conversion of the switch house will increase Tate Modern's display space by a huge 60 per cent, allowing more room for its collections, as well as for performance and installation art. The opening on 17 June will also see a complete re-hang, creating a fresh look for one of London's most visited galleries. www.tate.org.uk



CURTAIN UP

Celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Olivier Awards, a new display at the Victoria and Albert Museum, running until 31 August, explores the behind-the-scenes world of the West End's most lavish productions from *The Phantom of the Opera* to *Wolf Hall*. In *Curtain Up: Celebrating 40 Years of Theatre in London and New York*, curated by stage designer Tom Piper, tread the boards with Joey from *War Horse* or catch a glimpse of costumes worn by Rudolf Nureyev in *Romeo and Juliet* or Dame Helen Mirren in *The Audience* (left), with scripts, photographs and footage from the West End and Broadway's biggest hits. www.vam.ac.uk

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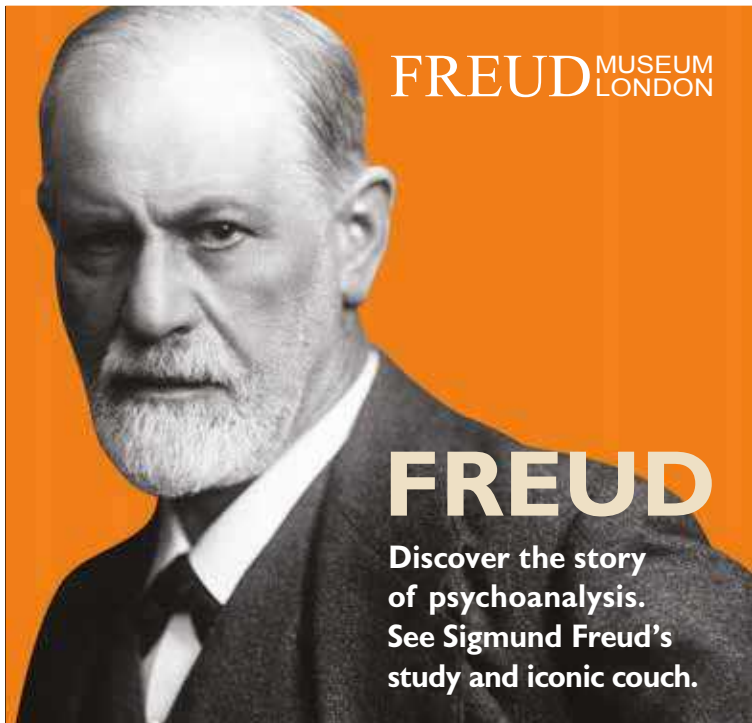
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Number ONE London

What lies behind the doors of this exclusive address? **Alexander Larman** visits Apsley House, home of the 1st Duke of Wellington, to find out



If you had to name England's greatest military hero, there are a few names that would spring to mind. Lord Nelson, of course. Francis Drake, perhaps. And, without doubt, Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington: the man responsible for Napoleon's final defeat at the Battle of Waterloo – a clash of which he later said: "I never took so much trouble about any battle, and never was so near being beat."

It is therefore fitting the residence that Wellington bought to celebrate his victory, Apsley House, is one of the grandest houses in London. Boasting a collection of almost 3,000 paintings, sculptures and objets d'art, the house once known as "Number one, London" is fit, if not quite for a prince, then

certainly for a man who was sufficiently loved by the British public to be awarded £700,000 as a prize to construct what was intended as a 'Waterloo Palace'.

If the money was expected to finance a grand country retreat, akin to Blenheim or Chatsworth, then Wellington took delight in subverting expectations. Rather than constructing a palace from scratch, he instead occupied the recently built Apsley House, which had been constructed by the fashionable architect Robert Adam for Henry Bathurst, 1st Baron Apsley, who gave his name to the building.

Sold to Wellington's brother Richard in 1807, the property was then taken on by Wellington in 1817. Armed with his grand

fortune, and with the assistance of the architect Benjamin Dean Wyatt, the Duke spared no expense in constructing one of the finest houses of the day, a monument to Regency taste and sophistication that also advertised its owner's status as the greatest man in the country, barring royalty – and possibly not even that.

Today, the house is still partially inhabited by Wellington's descendants, who have maintained Apsley's remarkable standing as one of London's most distinguished private houses. Hyde Park Corner has changed ➤

Main image: The Waterloo Gallery at Apsley House laid out for a banquet **Top left:** The Wellington Memorial and Apsley House at Hyde Park Corner





Above, top to bottom: Portrait of Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington; the *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker* sculpture which was presented to Wellington by George IV as a memento of his defeated adversary

somewhat since the Duke's day – and it's doubtful that Wellington would greet the plethora of luxury hotels and high-end apartments with undiminished glee.

But when you enter the remodelled entrance hall, carefully designed by Wellington and Wyatt to offset the noise and hubbub of the din outside, you are surrounded by tranquillity.

The keeper of the remarkable collection at Apsley House, Josephine Oxley, has had the pleasure of being responsible for the array of riches for the past six years. She believes the best thing about her job is “the variety – one day, you might be supervising the moving of priceless works of art, and the next you might be chatting to a curious visitor about the Duke of Wellington. There are endless possibilities in this job, and of course it's a fantastic place to work, being surrounded by Wellington's collection.”

Visiting, it's easy to see what she means. The inner hall is festooned with a series of striking marble and brass statues, including one commemorating Prince von Blücher, Wellington's Prussian ally at Waterloo. At the bottom of the sweeping staircase, there is an unexpected tribute to his former nemesis, namely Antonio Canova's sculpture *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker*, which was constructed in 1802-6. Famously called “trop athlétique” by Bonaparte himself, it was purchased by the British government for 66,000 francs in 1816 and presented by George IV to Wellington as a suitably regal memento of his defeated foe.

Magnanimous in victory, Wellington never ceased to admire Napoleon as a master tactician and worthy adversary, and owned several portraits of the man who would be emperor of all Europe, one of which, a copy of Robert Lefèvre's depiction of him, is displayed in the Portico Drawing Room.

The Duke was respectful of Adam's original vision for the house, and the Piccadilly Drawing Room on the ground floor remains one of the finest interiors of any house in London, with a grandiose ceiling and frieze. It was intended to overlook Piccadilly and, when it was later constructed, the Wellington Arch at Hyde Park Corner, although inevitably the advances in modern construction have spoilt the view.

Adjacent is the aptly named Waterloo Gallery, which boasts the Spanish Royal

Collection of paintings, including works by such masters as Goya, Rubens and Velázquez. These great works of art are displayed in a suitably palatial interior, with the gallery itself stretching more than 90 feet; Wellington used it as a place to hold the annual Waterloo Banquet to celebrate his victory, and kings, princes and foreign politicians were all received with the pomp becoming their status.

Some of the greatest treasures arrived here by unconventional means; as Oxley explains: “After the Battle of Vitoria in Spain at the end of the Peninsular Wars, Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother, was fleeing the battlefield after his defeat and was found to have looted artworks in his baggage train. The paintings were rescued by Wellington's forces and after the wars were over they were awarded to Wellington by King Ferdinand of Spain. Today, 81 pictures that survived the battle hang on the walls of Apsley House.”

Art and its often surprising provenance play a key role in the collection. For Oxley, one of the most unexpected discoveries occurred relatively recently.

“About two years ago, our paintings conservator was working on a painting called

“At the bottom of the sweeping staircase, there is an unexpected tribute to Wellington's former nemesis”

Titian's Mistress. The painting had always been labelled as ‘school of Titian’ but when it was X-rayed it was found to have another painting underneath which was totally different, and we discovered a Titian signature.” However, if she's asked which items are

her favourite, it's a mixture of the famous and the quirky. “Definitely the Napoleon statue,” she says immediately. But there's also another item that gives a rather nice insight into the ageing Wellington.

“A very quirky little thing – a walking stick with a hearing aid on the end of it. As the Duke got older, his hearing became very bad as he was out walking, so if people stopped to talk to him he could put the top of his cane up to his ear. It had a trumpet-like device, so he was able to hear them.”

There are, of course, many other glories and items of interest, not least the museum's rich collection or the mighty State Dining Room, where the echoes of lavish – and, one hopes, gossip-laden – dinners can still faintly be heard, two centuries later. ■

For more information about Apsley House, visit www.english-heritage.org.uk

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Breathing space

London's Royal Parks are as rich in history as they are greenery.

Nicola Rayner investigates how these regal playgrounds
became sites for the people's pleasure



Previous page:
Idyllic views of
Buckingham Palace
from St James's Park
Left: The Albert
Memorial as seen
from Hyde Park



“It was a saying of Lord Chatham that the parks were the lungs of London,” claimed Lord Windham in a speech in the House of Commons in 1808. The debate in question discussed the controversial encroachment of buildings upon Hyde Park – at the time, London’s parks were under threat from the western expansion of the city. The capital was growing rapidly and urbanisation was gobbling up the green spaces – villages, commons and fields – that surrounded it. Fortunately, however, there were those who were prepared to preserve the precious green spaces that survive to this day in the heart of the capital.

The Royal Parks are Crown property, but in 1851 an act of parliament transferred management of the parks from the monarch to the government. This meant public access to all London’s Royal Parks for the first time. Ranging from the sprawling wilds of Richmond to the exquisite rose gardens of Regent’s Park, the eight Royal Parks cover 5,000 acres across the capital and include, in addition to the aforementioned two: Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, Bushy Park, St James’s, Green Park and Greenwich Park.

And Londoners love them. As soon as the sun comes out, and often if it doesn’t, they tip out into them – to walk, to picnic, to socialise. But the “lungs of London” are more than just playgrounds for city-weary folk. They are where we gather at times of celebration – royal jubilees or weddings – or even times of sadness, as in 1997 when a carpet of flowers, an outpouring of feeling for Princess Diana, spilled out across Kensington Gardens. And, as with so many things, it is one of England’s most famous kings, Henry VIII, whom we have to thank for a clutch of London’s most famous Royal Parks.

Henry’s hunting ground

“Henry was a great huntsman, like many kings at that time,” explains Mike Fitt, chairman of the Royal Parks Guild. “And you have to think of London, in those days, as countryside... All the way up from Westminster to St James’s – which was marshy land and had the leper hospital that became St James’s Palace – to Hyde Park, that was all forest.

“It even stretched into places like Soho: So-*ho* was a hunting cry. All that land was for hunting, but kings liked to control the area they hunted on. It was much easier to hunt deer corralled, fenced in, and so deer parks were very popular. Hyde Park – remembering that it was then Kensington Gardens as well – was a deer park, as was Greenwich. And the deer parks were the beginning of the fenced-in Royal Parks.”

Before Henry came along, much of the land belonged to the church. “It would have been used by the monks for farming, fishing and hunting,” explains Fitt. The dissolution of the monasteries was a contributing factor in the development, he explains. Hyde Park, for example, was formerly the property of Westminster Abbey, and acquired by Henry in 1536 to extend his hunting ground from the marshy waterfowl areas of St James’s Park, which he acquired four years earlier. It was Henry VIII, ►

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JANE SWEENEY/PA/CORBIS/PHIL RUSSELL/SARAH CUTTLE/GILES BARNARD/GREYWOLF/ROYAL PARKS

Above, left to right: The Georgian Pembroke Lodge in Richmond Park; St Paul's Cathedral can be seen from King Henry's Mound
Below: Coronation Plantation in Richmond Park

too, who created Bushy Park – the second largest and the most westerly of the parks – as an extension to the grounds of Hampton Court, but a later king, with a fairly sizable ego of his own also made his mark on the place...

Stuart upstarts

At Bushy Park, Charles I, no stranger to hubris, had the idea to create the Longford River, a 19-kilometre artificial waterway, as Hampton Court Palace was short of water. Designed by Nicholas Lane in 1638-39, the Longford River was built by hand. "Apparently all the parishioners had to dig a bit each," Fitt explains. The project took nine months to complete, cost £4,000 and went on to supply Bushy Park's beautiful water features.

The ill-fated Charles I was also responsible for creating Richmond Park, the largest Royal Park, best known for its magnificent herds of red and fallow deer. "Medieval deer parks had gone out of fashion by then, but Charles recreated one," says Fitt. "Some of it was Crown land but he assembled it from wastes, which are not used for anything, and land owned by others. Then he put a wall all around it and made his new park. Of course, that was one of the things that contributed to his unpopularity."

At the highest point of Richmond Park is Pembroke Lodge, a Georgian mansion that started out as a mole-catcher's cottage. Fitt explains: "When you've got a hunting park, one of the issues are moles, because if you're galloping along and your horse puts his hoof down a mole hole, then he breaks his leg."

The Countess of Pembroke had an eye on the lodge as a place to build a fine house, and it was enlarged and improved by Sir John Soane. It was famous in the 19th century as the home of prime minister Lord John Russell and as the place where the Crimean War was signed off in 1854. Throughout the summer Pembroke Lodge is offering a free shuttle bus to Richmond's glorious Isabella Plantation best known for its evergreen azaleas (for more see www.visitrichmond.co.uk).

Even in Richmond, there remains a memory of Henry VIII's hunting. A steep mound in Pembroke Lodge Gardens, known as King Henry's Mound, is claimed



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by some to be where King Henry VIII stood on 19 May 1536 to watch a rocket fired from the Tower of London. This was the signal that his wife, Anne Boleyn, had been executed, allowing him to marry Lady Jane Seymour. The story is unlikely to be true, however, not least because Henry spent that evening in Wiltshire.

Today, quite by chance, it's the perfect spot to see St Paul's Cathedral to the east. "That was a coincidence," says Fitt. "But a view was created later through the plantations to focus on St Paul's – it was a landscape design." The vista has been faithfully preserved by generations of landscapers and is now protected with no new building allowed to impede it.

Regency style

Regent's Park once formed part of the vast hunting chase appropriated by Henry VIII, but it wasn't until in 1811 that it became the Georgian beauty it is today. With the help of his friend, the architect John Nash, the Prince Regent, later King George IV, was determined to make his mark. "The Prince Regent wanted a grand route from St James's all the way to Regent's Park," explains Fitt. "The idea was this avenue would lead to a big palace, which would have been roughly where London Zoo is now. It was all planned around the fact he wanted to build lovely villas set in parkland with a palace at the end. The palace never happened, but a lot of the villas did."

The complete plan was never implemented because the prince turned his attention instead to improving Buckingham Palace. Elements of Nash's scheme survived, however: the processional route to St James's Palace became Regent's Street and visitors today still admire the elegant Georgian architecture. Although initially access to the park was restricted to residents of the villas and terraces and the elite "carriage set", in 1835 the east side was open to the public and eventually people could visit the whole park and Primrose Hill nearby, which offers a spectacular view across London skyline.

Today, Regent's Park is home to the famous Open Air Theatre, as well as Queen Mary's Gardens, named after the wife of George V, which feature more than 12,000 roses at their best in early June when their scent wafts through the park. With excellent sports facilities spanning nearly 100 acres, Regent's Park is also the place in London to spot waterfowl and over 100 species of wild birds.

Queen Victoria's gift to London

Lovers of Victorian history should make straight for Kensington Gardens, the setting for Kensington Palace, the London home of William III and Mary II, where Queen Victoria was born and lived until she became monarch in 1837. Queen Caroline, the wife of George II, moulded the gardens into their current form in 1728, by creating the Serpentine Lake and Long Water. ➤



Main image: Park Crescent overlooks the fringes of Regent's Park
Above: Kensington Gardens' charming Peter Pan statue



Above, left to right: Hyde Park's Serpentine; Green Park and St James's are at the heart of royal London
Below: Trooping the Colour

“Queen Caroline created Kensington Gardens, commandeering a great chunk of Hyde Park,” says Fitt. “When she did that, it was fenced and only the best sort of people could go. Hyde Park, the bits left, was always open to the public. But to get into Kensington you either had to know someone or you had to have a special ticket, which wasn’t bought. It was a favour.”

During Queen Victoria’s reign this changed: Kensington Gardens, along with all the Royal Parks, was open to the public with 1851’s Crown Lands Act, which may have been related to the success of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park that same year. The romantically minded could argue that Kensington Gardens reads as a love letter between Queen Victoria and her beloved Albert.

The ornamental Italian Gardens, near Lancaster Gate, for example, are believed to have been created as a gift from Prince Albert to his queen, while poignantly, on the other side of the park opposite the Royal Albert Hall, the ornate Albert Memorial commemorates the death of the Prince Consort at the age of just 42. Other points of interest are the Diana Memorial Playground, close to her Kensington Palace home, and the bronze statue of Peter Pan commissioned by his creator, JM Barrie, who lived close to, and was inspired by, the neighbourhood.

Kensington Gardens enjoys a more tranquil reputation than its rowdier neighbour, Hyde Park, where today British Summer Time concerts and Proms in the Park take place. The boundary between the two is West Carriage Drive, which crosses the Serpentine (as you pass over the bridge from the north, you move from Hyde Park to Kensington Gardens). Hyde Park’s reputation as a centre for public gatherings took off in the 19th century during the Reform League’s fight for manhood suffrage. “After





many incidents it was decided they would declare one part of the park as the place you could gather and speak without hindrance,” explains Fitt. “In that way, Speakers’ Corner [by Marble Arch] became formalised. It became a place you could vent your feelings, no matter what.”

Royal London today

Right on the doorstep of Buckingham Palace, Green Park and St James’s are at the heart of ceremonial London. As an organisation, Royal Parks manages the Mall and the whole area in front of Buckingham Palace up to the gates. To mark the Queen’s official birthday, Trooping the Colour is held on Horse Guards Parade in St James’s once a year. This colourful military parade involves the Queen carrying out an inspection of the troops. Of course this year’s event, on Saturday 11 June, promises to be a very special event in honour of HM The Queen’s 90th birthday.

For the ideal place to spot the park’s waterfowl make for the Blue Bridge, which also happens to offer some of the best views of London’s icons: Big Ben, the London Eye and Buckingham Palace. While you’re out enjoying the wildlife in one of London’s famous “lungs”, you can take a deep breath, look up and remember you’re in one of the biggest and most exciting cities in the world. ■

www.royalparks.org.uk

AT A GLANCE...

For a spectacular view all the way to St Paul’s, make for the statue of General Wolfe in **Greenwich**, the oldest enclosed Royal Park.

Pelicans were introduced to **St James’s Park** in 1664 as a gift from the Russian ambassador and remain there to this day.

Samuel Pepys used to eat at the Cheesecake House in **Hyde Park**, where, on occasion, survivors (or not!) of duels in the park would be taken afterwards.

As well as the eight Royal Parks, the organisation maintains other spaces including **Victoria Tower Gardens**, a gem near the Houses of Parliament.

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Visitors from other more expansive parts of the world often comment on how tiny everything is in Britain, from sweet little cobbled streets to listed buildings where your shoulders touch the sides as you climb winding staircases. Surely that can't also be the case in London, one of the biggest, most modern cities in the world? We avoid the grand palaces and sweeping skylines to go in search of seven of the most charming bijou bits of the capital...

Smallest square: Pickering Place

When walking through to this minuscule courtyard, barely big enough to be called a square, marvel at the plaque on the side of the Berry Bros and Rudd building as it will reveal that here was where the legation (a type of embassy) of the Republic of Texas was based. Yes, Texas was a republic from

1836 to 1846. However, diplomacy wasn't usually the order of the day in this square as this is where the last public duel was fought.

Smallest church: St Ethelburga-the-Virgin, Bishopsgate

Divine inspiration can be found in the cosiest of spots and this little medieval church in the City of London needed plenty of it when it was almost completely destroyed by an IRA bomb in 1993. It was restored to its former tiny glory and reopened as a centre for peace and reconciliation. A former priest was reprimanded by his bishop for allowing couples who wanted to marry there to leave their suitcases at the church for six months by way of gaining "citizenship" of Bishopsgate. It was also renowned in the 1930s as one of the few churches in London in which divorced people could remarry.

Smallest police station: Trafalgar Square police outpost

While not strictly a police station, this outpost on the southeast corner of Trafalgar Square was built in 1926 so a policeman could keep an eye out for demonstrators.

Built inside an ornamental light fitting, the box only had space for one policeman to comfortably stand and for two prisoners to be very temporarily held. Being in a light fitting was handy because when they picked up the direct phone line to Scotland Yard to summon reinforcements, the light at the top would flash alerting nearby police officers. From such dramatic "Bat Signal" beginnings, it seems a bit sad that it is now just used to store the brooms of Westminster Council cleaners. ➤

Previous page: Pickering Place Above, left to right: Trafalgar Square police outpost; St Ethelburga church



DONNA RUTHERFORD/TONY LARKIN/REX SHUTTERSTOCK/
SIMON BALSON/STEVE DAVEY PHOTOGRAPHY/ALAMY

Smallest museum: The Faraday Effect, Trinity Buoy Wharf

This mini museum is a celebration of the life and times of scientist Michael Faraday, who conducted a number of his experiments at the lighthouse on the wharf. The latter – London's only lighthouse – was built in 1864 as a space to train lighthouse keepers and test lighting equipment.

Smallest bar: The Dove, Hammersmith

The smallest registered bar (as in the place from which you're served rather than the whole establishment) is just 4ft 2ins by 7ft 10ins and is found in the Dove pub in Hammersmith. This 17th-century

establishment was where poet James Thomson wrote the words to *Rule, Britannia!* And, if you pop along for a pint, you'll be walking in the footsteps of royalty since this was where Charles II wooed his mistress, Nell Gwynn.

Smallest statue: Mice on Philpot Lane

There is a sad story behind the anonymously carved mice on the corner of Philpot Lane and Eastcheap: they are said to represent two workmen who fell to their deaths fighting over a missing cheese sandwich while working on nearby Monument. It turned out naughty mice had been to blame.

Clockwise, from top left: The carved mice in Philpot Lane; the Ostler's Hut in Lincoln's Inn; the Faraday Effect museum; the Dove pub in Hammersmith

Smallest listed building: Ostler's Hut, Lincoln's Inn

An ostler was a man hired to take care of the horses of those who were staying at an inn and the smallest listed building, built in 1860, was for the ostler to the law students at Lincoln's Inn. Only intended as a small refuge from the weather, it is certainly very snug. However, the architecture is in keeping with the beautiful – and large – Lincoln's Inn where Dickens set some of *Bleak House* and the first performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* took place. In the 18th and 19th centuries, unwed women left babies at the chapel who were raised by the inn and given the surname "Lincoln". ■

For more on London's hidden gems, visit www.discoverbritainmag.com/home/london

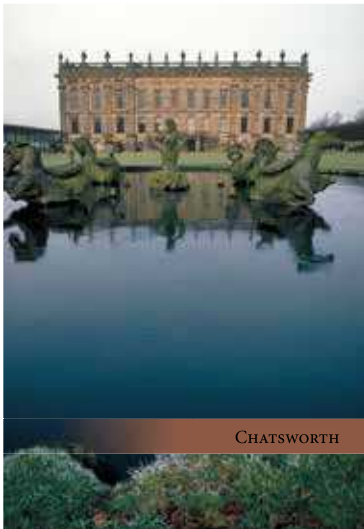
DISCOVER BRITAIN PRESENTS AN EXCLUSIVE READER TRAVEL OFFER



LET'S UNPACK IN THE PEAKS
6 - 14 MAY, 2016

The Peak District National Park covers 555 square miles right in the centre of Britain, straddling the Pennine Mountain range, which is known as the "backbone of England." Created in 1951, it was the first National Park and remains remarkable for its natural beauty and its proximity to the country's industrial heartland.

Tour a variety of places to suit any interest, from stately homes to some foremost industrial heritage sites, and crown the trip with a day at the home of the Dukes of Devonshire, Chatsworth House, known as the Palace of the Peaks.



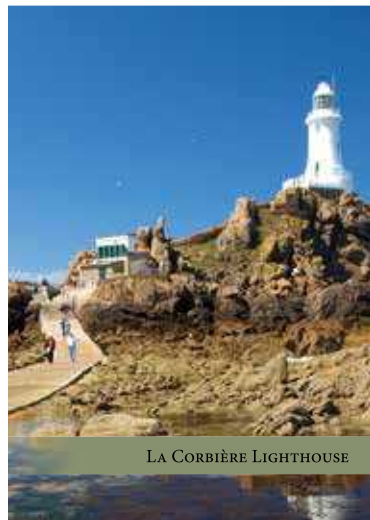
CHATSWORTH

Be part of the adventure and choose a unique region that sees few American tourists but is dear to the heart of many British people.



THE CHANNEL ISLANDS
9 - 18 JUNE, 2016

Inspired by the wonderful bestselling novel *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, our tour of the Channel Islands includes the full range of experiences, from wildlife sanctuaries to military museums.



LA CORBIÈRE LIGHTHOUSE

The Channel Islands have a fascinating history leading to their current semi-independent state as part of the Duchy of Normandy, which dates from the time when William the Conqueror ruled both England and Normandy.

These islands boast incredible natural scenery, with four RHS gardens in Guernsey alone, juxtaposed with vestiges from the German occupation during World War II. Discover the history and culture of these unique islands this June.

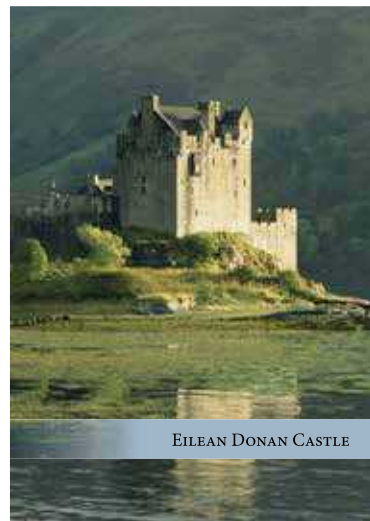


SKYE & THE HIGHLANDS
21 - 31 JULY, 2016

Breathtaking landscapes, romantic tales and legends, and the drama of noble and fiercely independent inhabitants all combine to leave an indelible impression. Wander through main thoroughfares and off the beaten path as the Highlands unfold in all their pristine glory.

From Edinburgh to Inverness, the Isle of Skye to the Holy Isle of Iona, the history and natural beauty of the Highlands unfurl at a pace that welcomes unexpected stops and detours. Appreciate the best of Scotland's dramatic scenery and journey through its unforgettable history on Skye & The Highlands.

We experienced so much more with this small group tour . . . so much more personal attention.
-Rockne F., Georgetown, TX

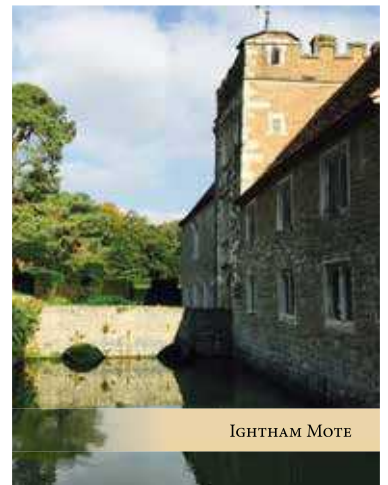


EILEAN DONAN CASTLE



KENT: THE GARDEN OF ENGLAND
6 - 15 OCTOBER, 2016

The county of Kent takes up most of the southeastern tip of England. In this mild climate the gentle slopes of chalk hills and the rich clay soils of central valleys combine in a special place known as the Garden of England.



IGHTHAM MOTE

The county is fertile and generous in its history. Walk in the footsteps of Anne Boleyn and Sir Winston Churchill in this unique region of England. See centuries of inspiration from the vast arches of Canterbury Cathedral to the hand-crafted splendour of the Morris & Co interior at Standen House in nearby West Sussex. Move in time from the 14th-century Ightham Mote to the underground tunnels at Dover used in World War II. There are endless opportunities to saturate yourself in the magnificence of county and country. Come to Kent this fall and discover this amazing corner of England.

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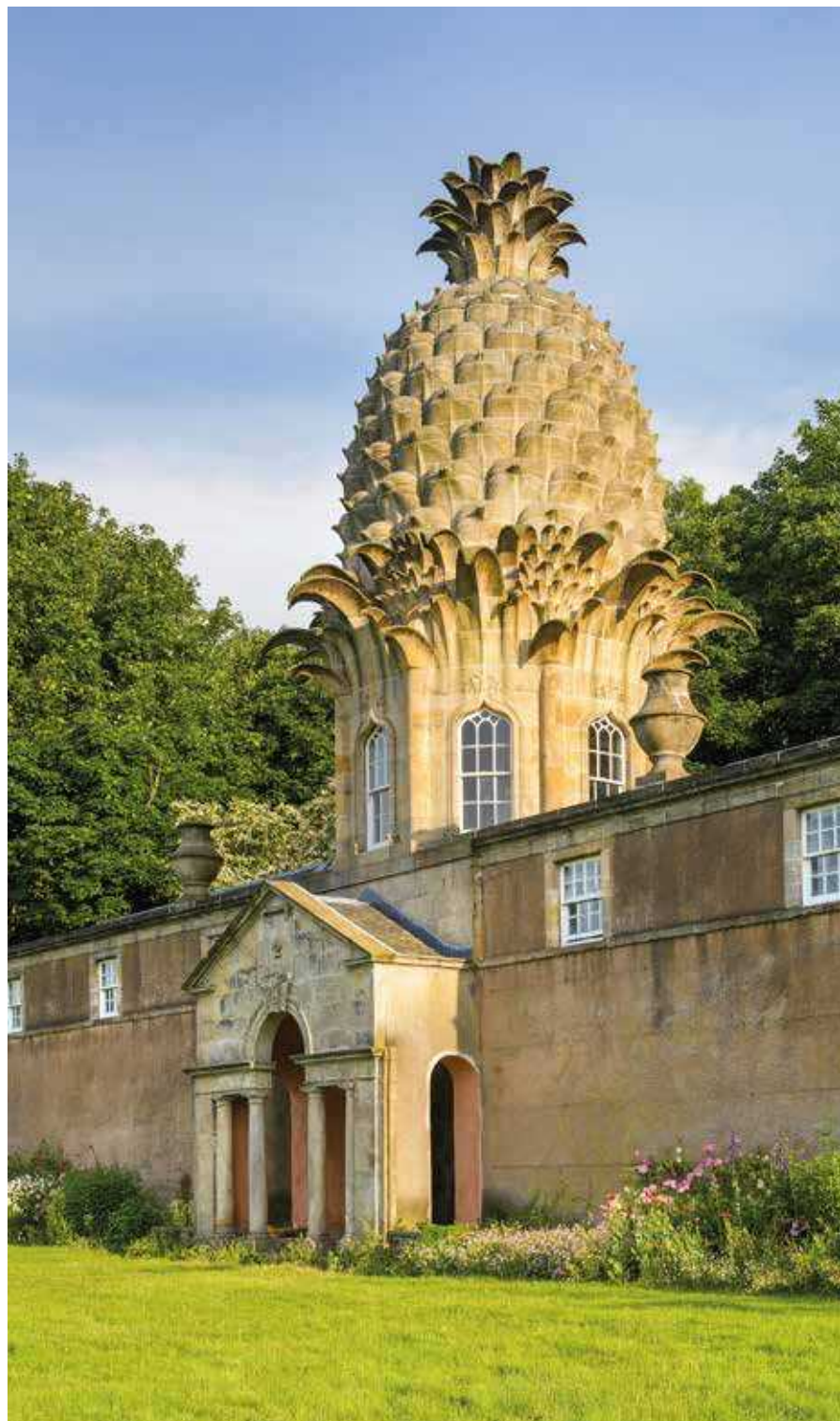
The Insider

On a seasonal tour of Britain,
Brenda Cook explores hidden gems
and asks... did you know?

WOOLLY SHEEP STORY

Wool is an integral part of Britain's history and heritage – it was woven into cloth as far back as the Bronze Age and, by the 13th century, the wool trade had become the backbone of the medieval English economy, particularly in the southern regions. To this day the Lord Chancellor's seat in the House of Lords is a large square cushion of wool called the Woolsack – a reminder of what was once the principal source of English wealth. With the rise of synthetics, global demand for wool has diminished and in British homes the old-fashioned woollen blanket has been replaced by the ubiquitous duvet. But all is not lost: a Hampshire company has hit upon the solution – the production of luxury duvets filled with the wool of Southdown sheep, a native breed that has roamed the South Downs for many hundreds of years. Owing to its dense nature, Southdown wool has a unique “cloud-like” bouncy texture. It's a warming return to Britain's woolly roots.

www.southdownduvets.com



FRUITY TOP

Pineapples are not something you might immediately associate with Scotland, but did you know the Dunmore pineapple is one of the country's fruity secrets? Built in 1761 as a summerhouse, the building is a strong candidate for Scotland's most striking landmark. It stands at 14m tall in the grounds of Dunmore House, the ancestral home of the Earls of Dunmore, and presides over a walled garden said to have been used for the growing of, among other things, pineapples. The building probably began as a one-storey pavilion and only grew its fruity dome after 1777, when Lord Dunmore returned from serving as Governor of Virginia. There, sailors would put a pineapple on the gatepost to announce their return home. Lord Dunmore, who enjoyed a joke, announced his return more prominently. The Landmark Trust lets the building, which sleeps four, as holiday accommodation.

www.landmarktrust.org.uk



THE BOATMAN'S CALL

Standing on its own island in the middle of the River Dee, the forbidding Threave Castle is accessible only by rowing boat from March to October. Now under the care of Historic Scotland, this massive tower house was built in the late 14th century by Archibald the Grim, Lord of Galloway, and became the stronghold of the Black Douglases. To reach the castle, leave from Kelton Mains farm and follow a pretty 10-minute walk until you arrive at the shore of the river. Here you'll find a small jetty and a brass bell with a rope pull. Ring the bell to summon the boatman, who will come across from the island to take you to the castle. Look out for the rare artillery fortification built before 1455 when James II besieged the castle. www.historic-scotland.gov.uk



ARISE, KING ARTHUR

Stories about King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table abound, but did you know one of them involves their return on Midsummer Night? Legend has it that the knights ride over the hilltop at Somerset's Cadbury Castle, an iron age hill fort, and down through the ancient gateway, stopping to allow their horses to drink at a spring beside Sutton Montis church. Below the hill are traces of an old track called Arthur's Lane or Hunting Causeway where some claim the ghostly sound of hooves can still be heard...

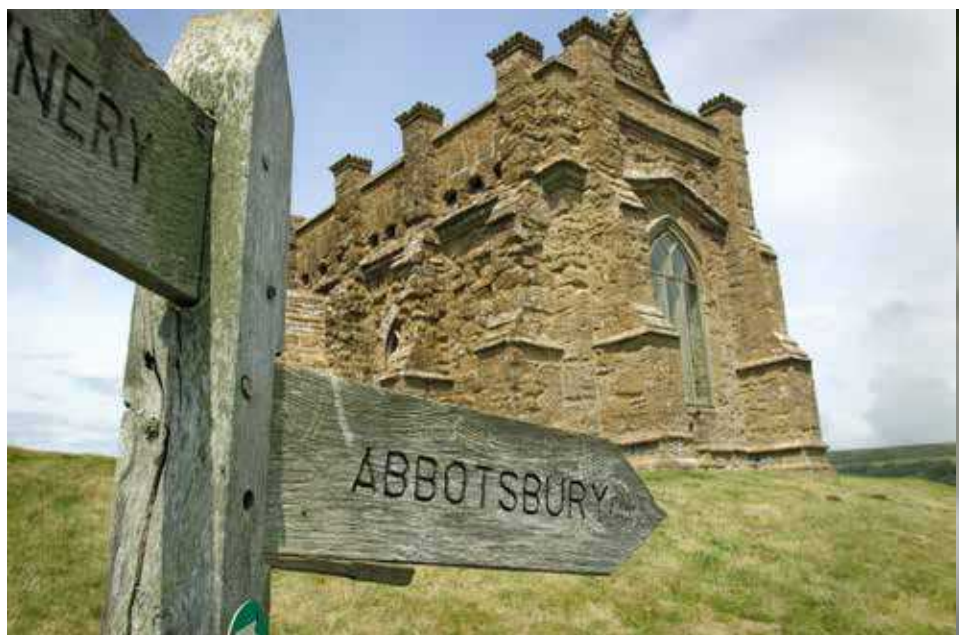


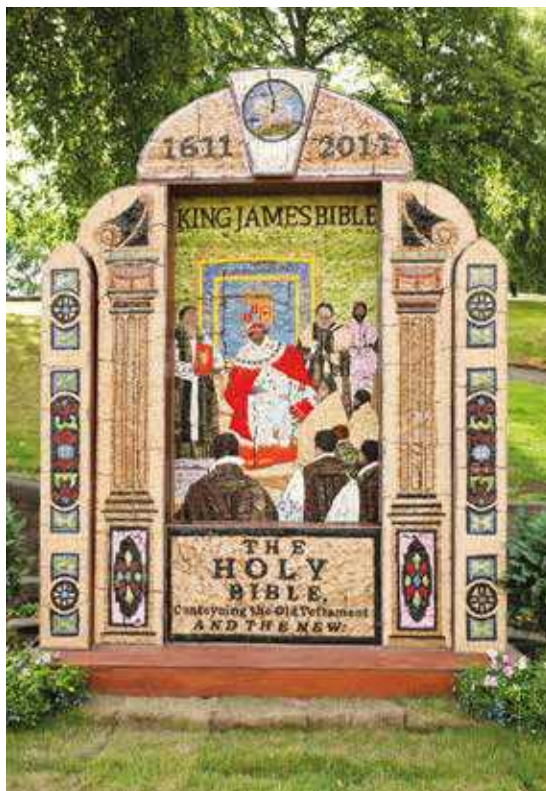
ISTOCK/ALAMY/SCOTT HORTON IMAGES/ST BRITAIN/MARTIN BRENT

SECRET COTSWOLDS

If you've passed through quaint Cotswold villages and wondered what life was like under the thatched roofs of the chocolate-box cottages, it's now possible to find out. In a unique six-hour package, Becky, of Secret Cottages, not only offers a tour to villages in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire inaccessible by public transport, but also gives guests a taste of warm Cotswold hospitality behind the doors of her own thatched idyll. Her 500-year-old cottage has three inglenook fireplaces with open log fires, winding stairs and floors made from ancient elm planks. In between sightseeing, Becky's guests are served tea, coffee and pastries, a generous buffet lunch and the quintessential English afternoon tea with scones served fresh from her Aga on fine Spode china.

www.secretcottage.co.uk





WELL, WELL, WELL

If you're passing through the villages of the Peak District over the summer months, you might notice an ancient custom alive and well. Well dressing – which was also once known as well flowering – is a unique tradition in Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Yorkshire involving the intricate decoration of wells, springs and other water sources with flower petals. The practice is said to have developed from a pagan custom of giving thanks for fresh water, but it took on a special significance when Derbyshire villages, most notably Tissington, attributed their deliverance from plague to their fresh water supply. www.welldressing.com

SWEEP SUCCESS

May is a festive time in Britain, when figures from its pagan past come dancing out into the streets, but did you know that, historically, it was a particularly important time for chimney sweeps? The May holiday was one time of the year when sweeps could dust off the soot and have some fun. In Rochester, Kent, the Jack-in-the-Green ceremony was central to festivities: the 7ft green character would be woken at dawn on Blue Bell Hill, Chatham, to accompany the chimney sweeps on their parade. Today the three-day Rochester Sweeps Festival is a vibrant mix of music, dancing and entertainment with more than 60 morris dancing sides taking part. And while you're in Rochester, take a peek at its cathedral, the second oldest in England.

www.visitkent.co.uk



SWAN SONG

Did you know the Abbotsbury Swannery is the only place in the world where you can walk through a colony of nesting mute swans? Dorset's famous swannery was founded by the Benedictine monks who built a monastery at Abbotsbury during the 1040s to produce food for their lavish banquets. While St Peter's was destroyed in 1539 during the dissolution of the monasteries – some of the ruins are still visible around St Nicholas' Church in the village – the swannery has endured and, from mid-May to the end of June, hundreds of cygnets hatch around the pathways creating a magical sight.

www.abbotsbury-tourism.co.uk





CONSTABLE COUNTRY

Marianka Swain paints a picture of Suffolk, the captivating county
that produced two of Britain's most famous artists

SUFFOLK



Childhood rambling through the picturesque villages and rolling countryside of Suffolk produced two of England's most famous painters: John Constable and Thomas Gainsborough, who spent their formative years in the southeastern county.

Suffolk, meaning “southern folk”, was formed from the south part of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of East Anglia in the 5th century. This east coast haven has kept one foot in the past, producing numerous significant archaeological finds – you can trace English history from the Stone Age through to the present day in its sites, buildings and artefacts.

The county came to prominence thanks to the wool trade in the 15th century. Successful local merchants built fine houses, grand guildhalls and towering churches. Unfortunately, Henry VIII's continental wars disrupted trading, but the decline of Suffolk wool towns did mean older buildings were well preserved while few could afford to construct new ones.

In both affluent times and hard, artists continued to draw inspiration from Suffolk's quintessentially English splendour, including composer Benjamin Britten, who founded Aldeburgh Festival, and authors Arthur Ransome, Dodie Smith, PD James and Roald Dahl. Today, it's still a haven for those with an artistic soul and an eye for beauty.



DO

WILLY LOTT'S HOUSE

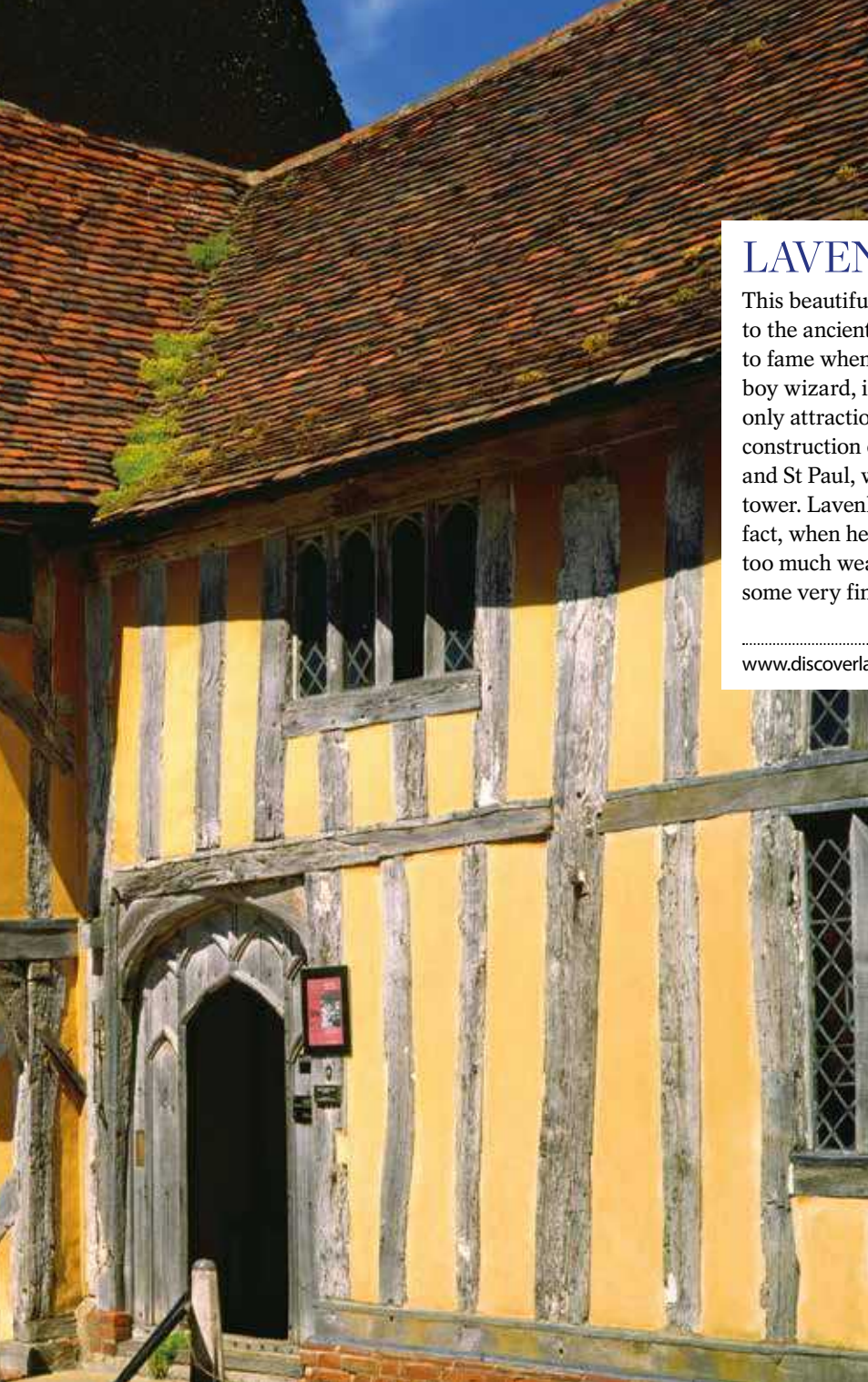
Instantly recognisable, this 16th-century structure (pictured on the opening pages) near Flatford on the River Stour was immortalised in one of the great English paintings: Constable's 1821 *The Hay Wain*. The artist's father owned Flatford Mill (left), while, across the stream, tenant farmer and family friend Willy Lott lived and died in this humble farmhouse. It was sympathetically restored in the 1920s and its name changed from Gibbeon's Gate Farm to Willy Lott's House to match Constable's designation. Although the interior isn't open to the general public, the Field Studies Council offers a range of courses with accommodation at the house or Flatford Mill, or you can take a guided tour of Constable's Flatford.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/flatford

LAVENHAM

This beautifully preserved medieval village, in the heart of Suffolk close to the ancient towns of Bury St Edmunds and Sudbury, gained a new claim to fame when filmmakers chose it for Godric's Hollow, birthplace of the boy wizard, in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. That's far from the only attraction, however. The village's success in the wool trade led to the construction of the Guildhall of Corpus Christi and the Church of St Peter and St Paul, whose cathedral-like proportions include an immense 141ft tower. Lavenham was once the 14th richest Tudor settlement in Britain – in fact, when he visited in 1487, Henry VII fined several families for displaying too much wealth. Today, Lavenham is rich in historic architecture, with some very fine shopping too.

www.discoverlavenham.co.uk



CHRISTCHURCH MANSION

Once you've seen Willy Lott's House, visit Constable's painting of the same name at Christchurch Mansion, on the edge of Ipswich. The 16th-century pile has a magnificent collection of work by Suffolk artists in the Wolsey Gallery – established on the 400th anniversary of Cardinal Wolsey's death. Explore Christchurch's period rooms, from the Tudor kitchen to the Victorian wing, and then venture into the 70-acre park.

www.cimuseums.org.uk/Christchurch-Mansion



SUTTON HOO

England's Valley of the Kings is critical to our understanding of the 6th and early 7th centuries, as Sutton Hoo's royal burial sites produced a wealth of Anglo-Saxon artefacts from 18 cemetery mounds. The most intriguing discovery was an undisturbed ship burial, excavated in 1939, where a figure of great import was laid to rest in a 90ft ship surrounded by prized treasures. The most likely candidate is East Anglian monarch Raedwald, notorious both for his victory over Northumbria and for establishing altars for Christ and the old gods side by side.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sutton-hoo



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GAINSBOROUGH'S HOUSE

"Nature was his teacher, and the woods of Suffolk his academy." So said an obituary of Thomas Gainsborough in 1788, emphasising the importance of his native county in the pre-eminent portraitist and landscape artist's development. Gainsborough's House places his art in context, so visitors can explore a fine collection of works while also learning about Gainsborough's Sudbury upbringing, admiring his original paint scraper and studio cabinet, and strolling through gardens dedicated to plants available in his lifetime – like the mulberry tree dating to the early 1600s, when James I encouraged their planting in order to establish a silk industry.

www.gainsborough.org



GAINSBOROUGH'S HOUSE/A PURKISS/TONY FRENCH/MARCUS HARRUP/ALAMY



ORFORD

This scenic coastal town has something for everyone. History buffs won't want to miss its 12th-century castle, built by Henry II, with its unusual polygonal tower, while birdwatchers will enjoy taking a boat from the charming quay over the River Ore to Havergate Island, whose RSPB sanctuary features breeding avocets and terns (pre-booking advised). There's also an iconic lighthouse, reachable via an invigorating walk along the Orford Ness shingle, homemade doughnuts at Pump Street Bakery – hailed in director Mat Kirkby's 2015 Academy Award acceptance speech – fresh seafood and cosy country pubs.

www.orford.org.uk

HELMINGHAM HALL

This moated manor house, begun in 1480 by John Tollemache and featuring 19th-century additions by esteemed architect John Nash, has been drawing up its two drawbridges every night since 1510. Gain entrance, and you'll find a spectacular semi-formal mixed garden featuring exquisite herbaceous borders, a rose garden, a box parterre, a knot garden, an orchard and an Elizabethan kitchen garden – appropriate, as Queen Elizabeth I herself visited for the christening of her godchild, Lionel Tollemache. Beyond, there's a fine walk through the 400-acre park, home to red and fallow deer. Helmingham Hall's gardens are accessible from May to September.

www.helmingham.com



Suffolk

ALDEBURGH

World-class classical music and equally prestigious fish and chips: it's a match made in heaven. Resident composer Benjamin Britten founded Aldeburgh Festival in this idyllic coastal town in 1948; his home, the Red House, is now open to visitors. This year's concert line-up includes Pierre-Laurent Aimard performing Messiaen's *Catalogue d'Oiseaux* against an appropriate backdrop of birdsong at Snape Maltings and RSPB reserve Minsmere – beautiful music in a beautiful setting. Aldeburgh's seafront promenade features pastel-coloured 19th-century villas and a pebbly beach where local fishermen display their catches; there's boating along the Meare at nearby Thorpeness, which features *Peter Pan*-inspired islands; and, of course, don't forget to visit the Aldeburgh Fish and Chip Shop.

www.visit-aldeburgh.co.uk

VISIT



FRAMLINGHAM CASTLE

Power is the defining feature of this 12th-century fortress. Norman family the Bigods used it as a base from which to scale the ranks of nobility – by 1213, they were entertaining King John. Perhaps the food wasn't to his liking, as the king besieged it three years later. It was here Mary Tudor, on the run from Lady Jane Grey's supporters, learned she'd been proclaimed England's first ruling queen. One of her first acts was to restore Framlingham to the Howard family.

www.english-heritage.org.uk



IPSWICH

Ipswich, Suffolk's historic county town, is England's oldest continuously settled Anglo-Saxon town. From its medieval streets and churches to fine buildings and vibrant waterfront, Ipswich's winning mix of old and new is easily explored on foot or by water. Guided walks leave from the town's tourist information centre at St Stephen's Church, bringing to life 1,500 years of history, architecture and people connected with the town, such as Cardinal Wolsey and Charles Dickens. Or explore the beautiful River Orwell on a river cruise from the waterfront out towards the sea at Harwich Harbour. Cruises pass through Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty as well as through the bustling ports of Felixstowe and Harwich.

www.allaboutipswich.com; www.visitsuffolk.com

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Hintlesham Hall is extremely well placed for exploring Suffolk's delightfully unspoilt 16th century wool merchants' villages, its pretty river estuaries and 'Constable Country'. Newmarket racecourse and the coastal town of Aldeburgh, famous for its music festival, are within easy reach, as are Lavenham, Long Melford and Woodbridge, with their numerous antique shops.

Hintlesham, Ipswich, Suffolk IP8 3NS | Tel: +44(0)1473 652334 | Email: reservations@hintleshamhall.com

www.hintleshamhall.com



SECKFORD HALL

Seckford Hall in Woodbridge is steeped in Tudor history. Thomas Seckford, the family's most famous member, was one of two "Masters in Ordinary of the Court of Requests", whose duty it was to accompany Queen Elizabeth I when she travelled in the provinces. It is believed that the queen held court at Seckford Hall and slept in a four-poster bed in the Tudor room. It's also said that one of the armchairs in the Great Hall is where King Edward VI was sitting when he died. Today the four-star hotel, set in 34 acres of rolling Suffolk countryside, offers luxury accommodation with 32 rooms, a Tudor Bar, its 1530 restaurant and traditional afternoon teas.

www.seckford.co.uk



THE SWAN

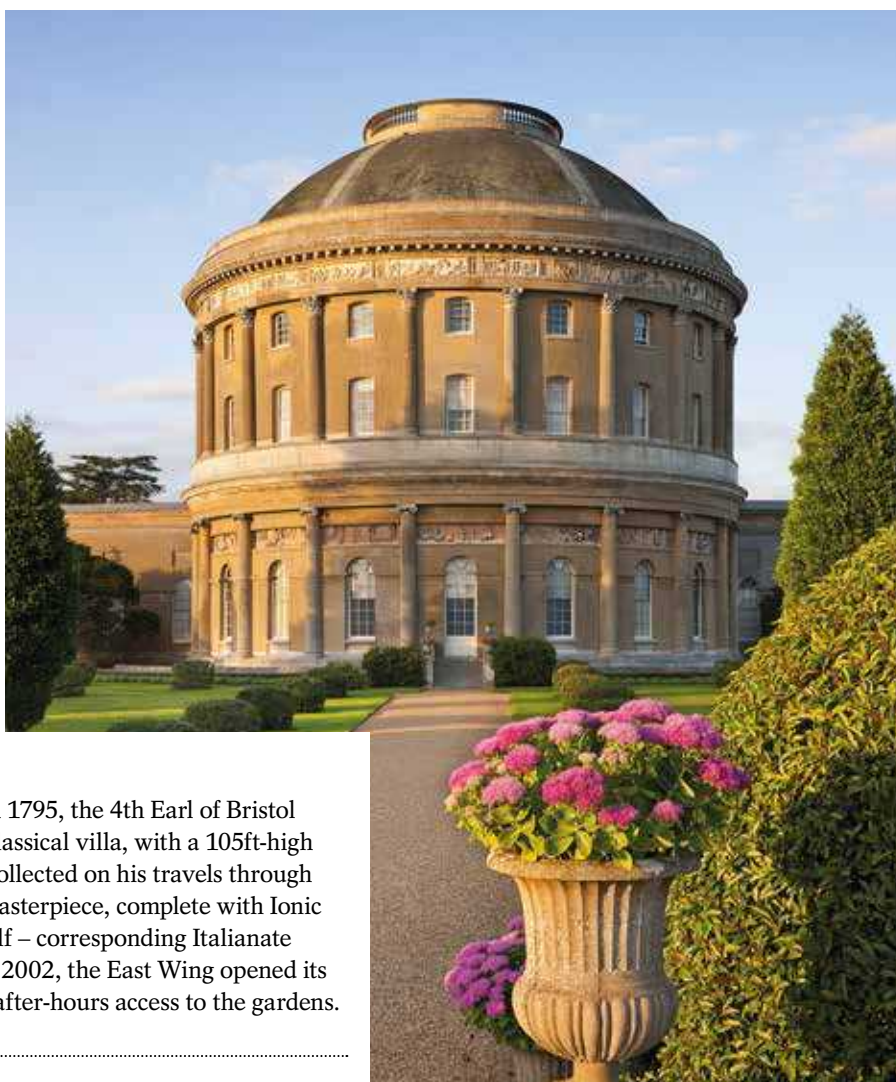
Even surrounded by other medieval gems, the 15th-century Swan in Lavenham shines, with lattices of ancient woodwork garnishing the exterior and the interior. Guests slumber beneath exposed oak beams, with open fires and cosy corners making the Swan an inviting place to rest after exploring the village's Tudor architecture. With its name referencing Lavenham's rich history, the Weavers' House Spa has over 30 luxurious treatments that will help you relax.

www.theswanatlavenham.co.uk

ICKWORTH HOUSE

This Georgian palace is an awe-inspiring spectacle. In 1795, the 4th Earl of Bristol commissioned Italian architect Asprucci to design a classical villa, with a 105ft-high rotunda in which he could house priceless treasures collected on his travels through Europe. The result is an extraordinary neoclassical masterpiece, complete with Ionic and Corinthian pilasters, and – a grand feature in itself – corresponding Italianate gardens and Capability Brown-designed parkland. In 2002, the East Wing opened its doors as a luxury hotel, where guests have exclusive after-hours access to the gardens.

www.ickworthhotel.co.uk; www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ickworth








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1: Barnsley House was once home to garden designer Rosemary Verey **2:** Haddon Hall and the Peacock (inset) are in the beautiful Peak District **3:** Explore Bowood's Capability Brown-designed gardens **4:** "Arcadian" Hotel Endsleigh **5:** Bodysgallen Hall offers magnificent views and gardens

Green and pleasant

To celebrate the Year of the English Garden, **Jemima Coxshaw** eyes up historic hotels with access to exquisite gardens

1 Barnsley House

Gloucestershire

Barnsley House was the Cotswold home of English garden designer Rosemary Verey, who began work on the gardens in the 1950s and went on to design many more, including the New York Botanical Gardens, as well as working for Prince Charles, Sir Elton John and Princess Michael of Kent. But Barnsley was her masterpiece: Verey took inspiration from large public gardens and adapted the ideas for smaller spaces. For example, her laburnum walk at Barnsley was inspired by the bigger version at Bodnant Garden in north Wales. Now a luxurious hotel, Barnsley's rooms range from spectacular two-storey suites to a private garden retreat with an open fire.

www.barnsleyhouse.com

2 The Peacock at Rowsley

Derbyshire

A stone's throw away from Chatsworth House in the heart of the Peak District, the Peacock at Rowsley is part of the Haddon Hall estate, owned by Lord and Lady Edward Manners. A former manor house, the Peacock has 15 bedrooms and is perfect for exploring the nearby stately homes and their stunning gardens. Described by Simon Jenkins as "the most perfect house to survive from the Middle Ages", Haddon Hall is set in an Elizabethan terraced garden. Believed to be among the most romantic in Britain, the garden, which boasts hundreds of spectacular roses, is in the care of Arne Maynard, a gold medal winner at the Chelsea Flower Show.

www.thepeacockatrowsley.com



3 Bowood Hotel and Lodge

Wiltshire

In the year that marks the 300th anniversary of the birth of Lancelot “Capability” Brown, it would be remiss not to include one of his famous landscapes. Situated in the heart of the Bowood estate in Wiltshire, the eponymous country hotel offers guests free access to the Georgian stately home as well as its grounds. Highlights include the formal terraces at the front and the four-acre private walled garden at the rear of the house, with a woodland garden opening annually between April and June. The luxury hotel also offers Queenwood Lodge, a Georgian manor house, for private hire. Shuttles to Bowood House can be provided on request.

www.bowood.org

4 Hotel Endsleigh

Devon

Described as a “fairytale cottage set in an Arcadian landscape” by Alan Titchmarsh, Hotel Endsleigh, on the edge of Dartmoor in Devon, sits in more than 100 acres of gardens, woodlands, follies and grottoes. The landscape was one of the last commissions taken on by the 18th-century designer Humphry Repton, two centuries ago. The formal gardens at Endsleigh run down to the River Tamar – the Duke of Bedford picked it as the spot for his hunting and fishing lodge 200 years ago – with the arboretum beyond. Restored by owner Olga Polizzi in 2005, Endsleigh has 18 exquisitely furnished rooms, including a thatched gatekeeper’s lodge.

www.hotelendsleigh.com

5 Bodysgallen Hall

Conwy

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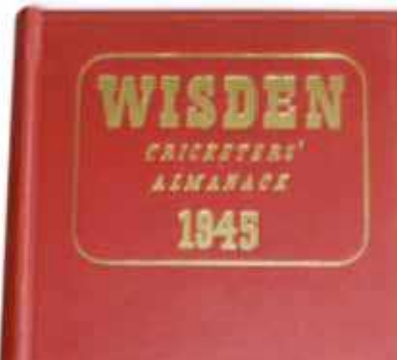
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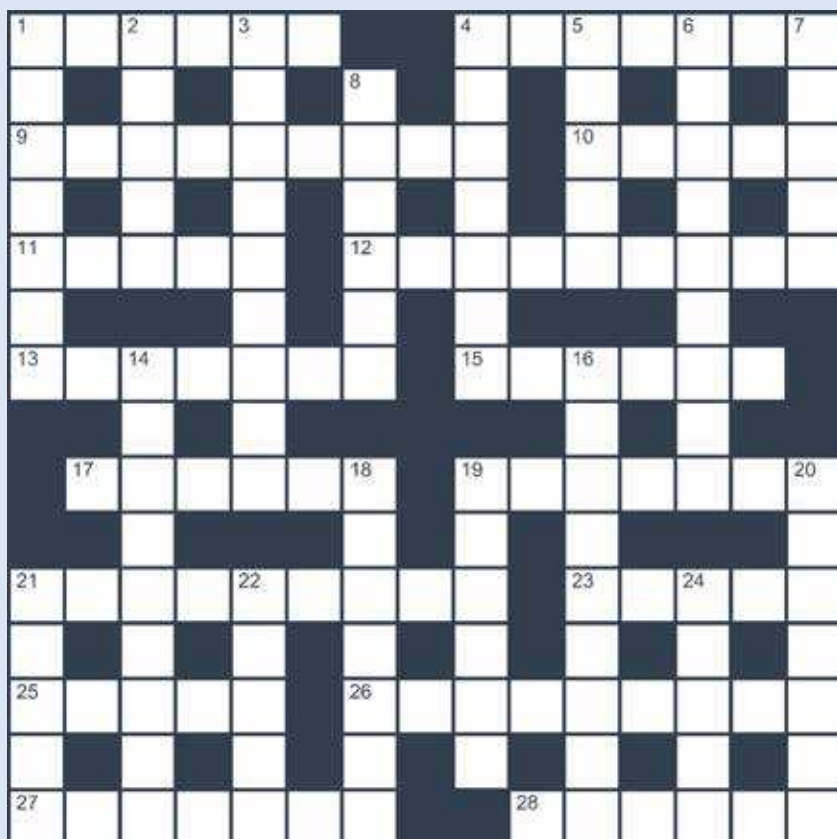
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Crossword no 190



Across

- 1 English poet best known for poems "The Borough" and "The Village" (6)
- 4 Nottinghamshire town known as the "Gateway to the Dukeries" (7)
- 9 London borough that includes Clerkenwell and Canonbury (9)
- 10 County of south-west England with a strong seafaring tradition (5)
- 11 A feudal lord or baron in Scotland (5)
- 12 Popular novel by the Victorian novelist Ellen Wood (4,5)
- 13 Berkshire town on the River Kennet and the Kennet and Avon Canal (7)
- 15 British commander in the Crimean war or a type of overcoat (6)
- 17 Famous National Trust gardens near Haywards Heath (6)
- 19 Elizabethan poet who wrote *The Faerie Queene* (7)
- 21 Protagonist of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (9)
- 23 A church council of delegated clergy and sometimes laity (5)
- 25 A bird such as the avocet or oystercatcher (5)
- 26 Channel between the Isle of Wight and southern England (3,6)
- 27 12th-century king of England, grandson of William the Conqueror (7)
- 28 Naval hero honoured with a statue in Trafalgar Square (6)

Down

- 1 Baddesley __, a medieval moated manor house in Warwickshire (7)
- 2 The largest town in Clackmannanshire (5)
- 3 Outer Hebrides island linked by causeways to South and North Uist (9)
- 4 Royal residence in Berkshire (7)
- 5 Village in which Wordsworth lived from 1813 to 1850 (5)
- 6 Town in Kent where Knole House is situated (9)
- 7 Pounds, shillings and __ (5)
- 8 __ St Mary, small town near Exeter where Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born in 1772 (6)
- 14 Surrey town near former airfield and motor racing circuit (9)
- 16 Castle and estate west of Penrith on the edge of the Lake District (9)
- 18 Yorkshire market town called "the gateway to the Dales" (7)
- 19 A poem of 14 lines (6)
- 20 Village near Bridlington containing Britain's tallest standing stone (7)
- 21 Seaport and resort on the north coast of the Isle of Wight (5)
- 22 __ Churchill, wife of the first Duke of Marlborough and friend of Queen Anne (5)
- 24 Turnips, in Scotland (5)

Visit www.discoverbritainmag.com for answers

SAY WHAT?

Can you identify which great Briton uttered these words of wisdom?



A

"I associate my careless boyhood with all that lies on the banks of the Stour; those scenes made me a painter, and I am grateful"

B

"I've persecuted the natives of England beyond all reason, whether gentle or simple. I have cruelly oppressed them and unjustly disinherited them"

C

"Who does not tremble when he considers how to deal with his wife?"

D

"History will be kind to me for I intend to write it"

E

"Everybody grows but me"

Turn to page 98 for the answers

Solution to crossword 189

Across: 1 Sculls, 5 Limerick, 9 John Carr, 10 Marble, 11 Hotspur, 12 Leek, 14 Adur, 15 Tea caddy, 18 Wat Tyler, 19 Polo, 21 Eden, 23 Reigate, 25 Severn, 26 Selborne, 27 Greenery, 28 Caesar

Down: 2 Clog, 3 Lyndhurst, 4 Shanty, 5 Lord Peter Wimsey, 6 Memorial, 7 Rural, 8 Calderdale, 13 Edward Lear, 16 Appledore, 17 Clarence, 20 Gaelic, 22 Niece, 24 Anna



“She would pray to her god ‘Allah Tallah’, fence and practise with a homemade bow and arrow”

The name Princess Caraboo may not sound very British, but hers, in many ways, is a very British story. From the Artful Dodger to Nell Gwynn, Brits love a chancer. Certainly, as most English eccentrics tend to be male and aristocratic, the story of Princess Caraboo stands out. Here it is...

Princess Caraboo appeared out of the blue on 3 April 1817 in the village of Almondsbury, near Bristol.

Wearing a black turban and a simple black dress with a high muslin collar, she spoke a language no one could recognise. The woman identified herself simply as “Caraboo” but little more than that could be deduced. Language experts and anthropologists flocked to examine her and yet no one could decipher either who she was or where she was from – until the arrival of a Portuguese sailor who claimed he understood her language. Translating her words, the sailor said the young woman was a princess from an island called Javasu, who had been abducted by pirates and escaped by jumping overboard in the Bristol Channel and swimming to the shore.

Thrilled at the presence of a princess in their midst, Samuel Worrall, the county magistrate, and his wife invited Caraboo to stay at their home, Knole Park. Visiting local dignitaries were duly entertained: adorned with feathers, Caraboo would pray to her god “Allah Tallah”, fence and practise with a homemade bow and arrow.

Living like royalty

Princess Caraboo was more of a British eccentric than she first appeared

News of Caraboo spread. There was a fascination with the East prevalent at the time, but her European appearance suggested she was from closer to home. Among the cognoscenti keen to try his skill at determining Caraboo’s origins, a Dr Wilkinson of Bath made a thorough attempt using Edmund Fry’s *Pantographia* and it was his detailed letter to the *Bath Chronicle* that began to unravel Caraboo’s story.

After reading the description of the princess in the paper, a lodging house keeper came forward: Princess Caraboo sounded rather like a former tenant of hers who had worn turbans and entertained her children with made-up languages. When confronted with the truth, “Caraboo” came clean: she was in fact Mary Baker, the daughter of a poor Devon cobbler, who used to make her living as a servant. The wealthy intellectuals had been well and truly deceived. And in the context of the Napoleonic Wars and the movement of Romanticism, which challenged the establishment and sympathised with the plight of the poor, there was more public compassion for Baker than you might expect. There is an intriguing, but unlikely, postscript to the royal impostor’s story. Following her unmasking, Caraboo is said, on her way to emigrate to the US, to have met with Napoleon, then in exile on St Helena. Indeed, one unverified version of the story even features a marriage proposal. ■

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